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THE
UNDERWORLD
OF PARIS

BY
HARRY J GREENWALL

LONDON
STANLEY PAUL & Co
31 ESSEX STREET, STRAND, W C 2

TO MY WIFE,
AND ALL JOURNALISTS' WIVES,
(GOD HELP 'EM)
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

PREFACE

I HAVE written this book without any idea of doing more than report facts. I have no axe to grind and would not tilt at a windmill even if I knew the rudiments of the sport.

Neither do I seek reform in the Underworld of Paris. A newspaper correspondent in a foreign land soon loses his illusions and reforms of existing conditions will never be brought about by writing books or articles.

Reformation is better left to the wiseacres, the statesmen and professional reformists, who actually achieve as little as we journalists.

In compiling this book I have honestly endeavoured to tell the truth. There may be some who will label my work sensational but it is sensational only in the same degree that striking events are. Truth they say is stranger than fiction and by the same token it is often much duller but many truths unpalatable as they may be are not dull.

Perhaps however I had better leave my readers to judge the wisdom of the foregoing remark.

If I have succeeded in portraying a phase of Paris life which is unfamiliar then my task will have been amply rewarded.

And so reader go to thy reading in peace

Paris

June 1921

H J G

**MAHARANA BHUPAL
COLLEGE,
UDAIPUR**

Class No . . .

Book No . . .

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THE UNDERWORLD OF PARIS.

CHAPTER I

PARIS IN THE DAWN

MANY men and women have tried to translate the charm of Paris into words—others more able than I have sought to catch some of the elusive atmosphere which wraps in sweet mystery the very word 'Paris'.

In writing of the Underworld I have left far behind me any lurking desire to gild the lily, neither do I try to improve on the success of other writers who have so nearly succeeded with pen and ink in portraying the city I love so much. No writer worth his salt can have lived in Paris without having had the desire at some time or other to seize pen and paper and write about the city. I know the thought has come to me often enough. Perhaps it was the sight of the chestnut trees in the Champs Elysées bursting into bud, heralding the coming of another spring—maybe it was a glimpse of two lovers sitting behind a pillar in Saint Sulpice church, their souls stirred by the music they heard but sub-consciously—"the world forgetting by the world forgot."

Other times thoughts have come crowding into my brain when leaning over the stone parapet of the Pont Neuf, watching the sun going down in a blaze of colour—salmon pink and soft grey, mixed as only the Great Architect can mingle them—softening the contours of the Trocadero and making of the Seine a river of gold.

Take a morning in June, when the first flush of dawn comes stealing over the Paris roof. There is not a breath of wind to stir the leaves of the trees—the streets are deserted save for an occasional sleepy-eyed policeman

puffing a cigarette. Another day has just been born. Paris at dawn seems a city of innocence. All around are teeming thousands with their own lives and destinies, their loves and their fights for existence (tiny ants crawling over a gigantic anthill). Thoughts swirl in one's brain and in the mind of those who earn their living by their pens: the thoughts form themselves into words, words alas, which are seldom ever written down. That is one of the tragedies of a journalist's life: in the hurry and scurry of getting news too often the really human and uplifting thoughts never find an outlet. Many books about Paris the real Paris could be written by those who know and love the city if only one had the time.

The policeman lights another cigarette from the stump of the previous one and I

I am going home from my work: the policeman like myself, is probably thinking about bed. We have both been on the watchtower all night: he for evil-doers and I for news, news that is to come to your breakfast table, hot and hot. Down the street comes the tap-tapping of Louis Quinze heels: above the heels there is an opera cloak, and above that a face rather careworn beneath the rouge but a face that not so long ago was as innocent as the dawn. Over the way there is a scraping, as if a tin pail were being dragged across the pavement. All along the streets of Paris at this hour men and women like pigs digging for truffles are seeking fortune in the bins. The two extremes of the Underworld meet dawn.

Ragpickers of Paris are a race apart. They live in a district just beyond the

Zone which even as I write are being demolished

in dirty little wooden huts the ragpickers have their dwellings sleeping in the morning, then sifting and selling the fruits of their labours they emerge from their hovels at night to earn their daily bread. Sometimes children, quite small children may be seen helping their elders, for in the 'Zone' little men and women begin to delve for their living almost as soon as they can toddle.

The men and women ragpickers are not the *créms*

de la crème of humanity Many of them have seen the inside of a jail on more than one occasion. But for the most part they are honest enough and only ask to be left alone and allowed to follow their trade without interference Broken meats and victuals cracked vessels scraps of cloth or clothing all are fish that come to their net With bent backs and their heads almost inside the garbage bins the *chiffonniers* (ragpickers) seem to fumble but in reality they are sorting the rubbish with the eyes and hands of experts Sometimes in the dawn one sees a prince of ragpickers a man who drives his own donkey and little cart Setting his steed at a trot he drives back to the Zone with his day's catch in the back of the cart

The majority are not so fortunate they stuff the odds and ends like castaways from household wrecks into sacks and start a long and weary trudge back to their huts

Presently there will be a loud rumbling and groaning like the sound of hundreds of souls in agony and round the corner will appear the dust carts driven by motor power Brawny men lift the bins and throw them into the slow moving vehicle They are pitched back to the pavement empty and the cart moves on to the municipal dust destructor

Presently comes the pitter patter of felt slippers the milkmaids (shades of country bred Phyllis) and the bread-carriers make their appearance The bloom of the country has not yet disappeared from these country wenches faces they are used to early rising They ring an unseen hand releases a catch and the girls are swallowed up in the houses they climb from floor to floor leaving the milk and bread outside the doors of the flat dwellers

Again the doors open and there appear the concierges their hair hidden by gaudy handkerchiefs Each one has a broom and begins to sweep the pavement from the door to the curb Leaning on their broom handles the concierges stop work and gossip Your secrets and mine dear reader are canvassed by our concierges to whom nothing is sacred They know what time we

returned home last night, they know and tell one another, too, what we had for dinner. Dear Heaven, they know we had words with the wife and why. nothing nothing at all is a secret.

While they gossip the street begins to fill with the workers—deep chested men and narrow chested guls—hurry along to the car, tram and Metro. Paris is awake.

II

NIGHT BIRDS

The Heels has gone home, brushing past her concierge, who gives a grunt in acknowledgment to her tired *bonjour madame*. Before the Heels has begun her weary climb of the stairs her life, morals and domestic economy are being discussed by her own concierge and those immediately to the right and left.

Yes you are right Madame Unetelle, it is of a cleanliness is it not to have such tenants in one's house? But what would you? The landlord the good man, must recoup himself for his war losses and he has only increased her rent three times what it was before the war. She, the hussy? Oh yes I do for her but oh, a stupid one, let me tell you but then it is not so long since she worked in the Rue de la Paix. But yes Madame, as you say, she will learn oh yes of a certainty she will learn."

The Heels has sunk wearily into bed too tired to even arrange her clothes which are part of her stock-in-trade. And while she sleeps let us reconstruct her night, which begins when others are preparing for bed.

She will rise late and in a peigrou will eat a scrappy meal prepared by the concierge who will not charge her more than four times the amount she should for you see she has a good heart as she so often remarks. Then unless she has a good dress or a hat to try on she will remain indoors until the evening. Perhaps there arrives a *petite amie* but friendship between one Heels and another is

of the kind which exists between two boxers both have their eye on the purse If there is no visit from a *petite amie* the Heels listlessly looks through the morning newspaper usually the one which is known as *le journal des concierges* Then slowly but with an eye on the clock the Heels puts on her warpaint for the night's battle for existence

It is a dreary business this preparation for the fray But later when you drop into Maxims or the Dead Rat you will find the Heels without a sign of weariness on her face Night after night she sits there waiting waiting Perhaps someone invites her to supper and she will talk and laugh and drink champagne and be amusing with her chatter But all the time behind the laughter she is asking herself Is my night to be wasted like this?

The man bids her good night and leaves her disappointed She sits and waits while the weary hours drag along She has heard all the tunes before her mouth becomes sully as the night grows older They call her a daughter of joy a painted butterfly Yes a butterfly which has been broken on the wheels of life

The night wears on maybe it is rent day to-morrow and the Heels wonders what she is going to tell the concierge if her luck does not change The orchestra lengthens the intervals between tunes for the restaurant is becoming empty and lifeless and Heels and her sisters look at the clock with eyes that are becoming haggard with despair When a man comes in they look up brightly with hope that springs eternal but the man very likely sees them as vultures seeking their prey sits down alone pays for his drink and quickly goes out

Weary and dreary the Heels prepares to go home gathering together her belongings from the cloakroom and going out into the street elbowing her way through the crowd of chasseurs night cabmen and hangers-on to the skirts of the night birds

Often am I asked How is it that the Parisians can go to their offices in the morning when they spend night after night in the cafés and restaurants? I inscribe this question on my tablets as a pendant to the

one which journalists are so often asked "How do editors get enough news to fill the newspapers?" It would take a book to answer that question, so I must dismiss it, but the former one can be replied to here and now

The answer is 'They don't' The questioner usually lifts his eyebrows in further question when he gets this answer, and I am sure that not one in ten believes me I cannot help it, it is true Parisians do not stay up all night in cafés They leave that to the night birds of all nations Go where you will in Montmartre or elsewhere, and you will find all the night haunts packed tight with men and women who appear to be enjoying themselves Here and there you hear the British or American accent and you recognise fellow countrymen. But of course, you say not all these people can be foreigners, some of them at least must be Frenchmen So they are, but not Parisians I will guarantee that if you would take a census of the frequenters of the night cafés on any occasion except on the night of a holiday, you would not find twenty Parisians in the room

There are very likely a certain number of Frenchmen up from the provinces, men on business, on pleasure, or those who are mixing the two Then they return to their homes and their provincial lives which are just as humdrum as any life in provincial England A day's work, an *aperitif* and a hand of manille before dinner then bed Thousands and thousands of Parisians are leading the same lives in Paris They are all around you You never see them you say? Of course you do not The Frenchman's home may be but ten yards from the spot where you are talking to him but it will take you ten years to pass his threshold But of this phase of life I shall have more to say presently

The point is that the people you see, the night birds of Paris are, excluding the women ninety per cent foreigners—South and North Americans, Greeks British, Spaniards, Italians, and once upon a time, Russians and Germans About eight per cent will be provincial and the rest (I will grant you this) Parisians That is

the answer to the question, "How do Parisians manage to get to their offices in the morning?"

Paris night life was created for foreigners. I might even say that foreigners played a great part in creating the night life. Take, for instance, *Maxims*. It is run by a British company, so is the *Frolics*. One might continue the list until one found that more than half of the best known night establishments were either financed or owned by foreigners. That is a side of the night life of which little has hitherto been said.

It is the same with the troop of girls who come on in short skirts and bare legs and who sing an unintelligible song. You turn to your companion, for here is something which is "so French, don't you know?" But you are wrong. Those girls come from Liverpool, where there is a school which turns them out like sausages from a machine, and troops of them are delighting audiences from Constantinople to Antwerp.

A by-product of the war, when most of the night haunts shut down entirely, the waiters into the trenches and the red coated orchestra into internment, was the night club. But this was not altogether a success, and war or no war people wanted to enjoy themselves. This led to a revival of the early morning visit to the markets, the Covent Garden of Paris.

III

LES HALLES

Back of the right bank of the Seine, where the bird fanciers' shops are you will find the Paris Markets. Another approach to them is straight away down the Rue Montmartre. Go through Les Halles any time between nine in the morning and nightfall and you will find yourself in an abyss of dirt and desolation. Just after nightfall the Markets are clean, and within a few hours then will be filthy dirty again.

An hour or a little more after sunset the first arrivals dribble in, and then as the night advances, the stream

thickens, carts high loaded with produce rumble over the cobbles, men and women arrive on foot to take away the fruits and vegetables, which have arrived with the dew fresh upon them

The Halles are as old fashioned as anything to be found in Paris. Other things have moved slowly towards modernness, but the mouth of the City has never had the attention of the dentist. Any great market in any capital city acts as a magnet to all kinds of extraordinary characters, and in this wise Paris is exactly like any other city. Covent Garden, I remember, used to possess a restaurant which opened expressly for the market people and on the morning after a Covent Garden ball it was the rendezvous of a certain class of Londoners. Paris, which has so many things to show visitors, has never attempted to parade the Central Market, so those who have found their way thither have done so when Dame Paris was taken off her guard.

If Covent Garden can show one eating house which caters for the fortnightly night bird 'I believe I am right in believing that the Covent Garden balls only occur once in two weeks' the Halles take the pas over it, and can boast of several. In the days when I was younger, the cabaret, known as the Chien Qui Fume (the Smoking Dog) was a place for the more adventurous of night birds. Its degeneration only served to increase its attraction for those who wished to see life. Once a humble but respectable eating and drinking establishment for the market folk, it gradually fell into disrepute and was soon a noted place for evil characters. Apaches of the male and female gender used to patronise it, and it became known as a place to be kept away from, although there were always people who used to say 'Oh Mr Greenwall, do take us to that amusing place near the Markets you know where all those Apaches are. But it was a dangerous proceeding to play bear-leader to honeymooning couples who wanted to collect adventures as other people collect postage stamps to exhibit the collection on their return to Suburbia, where I imagine Mr Greenwall must have acquired a reputation he by no means desired.

Other places around the Halles basked in the reflected

glory of the more notorious drinking shops, and quite soon the "patrons," with noteworthy acumen, saw there was more profit to be extracted from the sightseeing tourists than from the market porters, who only visited these places because they were obliged to do so. Le Pere Tranquil was a striking example of one who made hay while the electric arc lamps glowed. Father Tranquil was fairly tranquil at the beginning. His was, and still is, quite a small place facing the Markets. Downstairs there is a little zinc covered bar, and here the market porters were wont to drink their matutinal cup of coffee accompanied by a "little glass" the said glass containing cognac or vieux marc.

But the market porters were not out seeing life. They shrugged their shoulders unamiably at the women gowned in very little, accompanied by men who had drunk many little glasses before visiting les Halles. The patron of the P re Tranquil was wise in his generation. Upstairs there was an empty room doing nothing not bringing in a sou to the coffers. Le P re spent a little money on tables and chairs, some tablecloths etc., and there was a famous restaurant all ready for the night birds.

They came in droves. Business boomed. Le P re grew rich—and somewhat foolish. He tried to emulate Oliver Twist and 'wanted more'—money. The greasy looking waiter gave way to a pukka *ma tre d'h tel*, and there were serving damsels and what not and the prices leaped accordingly. The early morning 'breakfast' of tradition in the Halles consists of onion soup, ham and a bottle of wine. Three people foreigners, two men and one woman partook of this modest meal and were presented with a bill totalling £22. They protested.

Then there appeared (so I wrote in the *Daily Express* at the time) three tall men clad in corduroy trousers the red waist sash and the peaked cloth cap which are the customary wear of Paris hooligans. They got up from a table and adopted such a threatening attitude that the trembling guests paid the bill and left in a hurry. The hooligans, however, followed them outside and knocked them about.

The police were informed of this extortion by violence.

and early the next morning raided the *Père Tranquil*. Sixty persons were arrested and taken to the police station and made to produce their papers. Six of them were discovered to be criminals wanted by the police for various offences.

For some days the restaurant remained quiet, but very soon the night birds returned to their nest.

You may go to the *Père Tranquil* any night—or rather morning—and find it peaceful. But you may go once again and wish you had not. After your round of the Montmartre haunts you wend your way to the Halles. Your taxi racing at breakneck speed passes long lines of slowly moving carts loaded most neatly with piles of cabbages, carrots and other market produce. They are going where you are going, but their purpose is not the same.

Your taxi will probably not be able to penetrate right into the Halles, therefore you discharge it and make the rest of your way on foot, treading down rubbish of all kinds and elbowing and pushing your way through the busy throng you eventually arrive at your destination. Downstairs you find a tiny little bar behind which a man in his shirt sleeves is serving glasses of steaming hot coffee and many little glasses of alcohol. At the far end of the bar there is a steep staircase up which you climb.

You find yourself in an oblong room with tables running right round. A waiter pilots you to an empty table, and after a buxom young woman has removed your wraps, you have time to look around and take stock of your fellow guests. Any London police court magistrate would, I feel sure, give every man and woman here six months by just looking at his or her face. Indeed, the faces are not pleasant. You are sitting within a few paces of where thousands are toiling hard for their bare existence, who year in and year out rise long before the day is aired and work in the Markets. But here are those who neither toil nor spin.

Women with gorgeous gowns have dropped the artificial manner they were displaying a few hours ago when you saw them at the *Dead Rat* or *Maxim's*. They are reverting

to type as the night merges into morning Here a student of human nature will soon pick out the daughters of concierges and washerwomen which many of these girls are They gesticulate like fishwives and their language

You will perhaps be astonished to hear many of the women speaking German those who but a few hours ago you heard speaking French and whom you very likely thought were Parisiennes If they take you into their confidence they will tell you they are Alsatians for Paris abounds with them now But unlike many Alsatians they speak remarkably good German.

Over there are two women sharing a phial of cocaine. They do it openly in the early hours in the Halles. Going from table to table and talking gibberish is a drunken French sailor—apparently the only Frenchman in the place His breast is covered with war ribbons What he is doing here is a mystery At a table near the middle of the room there are three new arrivals two men and one woman The woman is English vivacious and rather pretty She seems to be slipping out of her gown and the pearls she is wearing could never acknowledge an oyster for a mother The taller of her two companions is a well known English crook in Paris He has polished manners—his best asset He talks amusingly to the other man—a mystery man—who poses as an Irish count but whom the police know to be of Hungarian birth

Some Americans come in very noisily Some of them have seen the inside of Sing Sing and their records since they came to France with the army are bad An American detective who visited one of the establishments in the Halles referred to his countrymen whom he saw there as bad men He might have added that they were also gunmen for on more than one occasion there has been gun play in the neighbourhood of the Halles

The hooligans whom I mentioned in connection with the raiding of the Pere Tranquil are not always to be seen on the premises but they are within hail It is rare indeed that the night or what remains of it passes without an incident of some kind destroying the harmony

of the night birds. It may be a quarrel between two Heels apropos of a man, a debt, or something perfectly insignificant, and in a moment the place is in an uproar. Glasses fly, necks are knocked off bottles and the opponents use them as weapons. Unlike Englishwomen of this class, who usually scratch when they fight each other the Frenchwomen take bottles, glasses, or anything else that is handy with which to hurt one another.

A fight usually ends in both parties to the battle being bundled out of the room and down the staircase into the street but when their male friends take a hand in the fight (as very often happens), the waiters give up trying to intervene and the 'patron' spends his time appealing for the police and at the same time hoping they will not come.

It would be impossible to raid these establishments in the markets without laying hands on wanted criminals and it is strange that raids are not carried out more frequently than they are. As long as the restaurants are kept open for the market people they are fulfilling a want but when they become the happy hunting ground of the scum of the night life of Paris, it is time they were stamped out.

In the hours preceding the dawn you will find the dregs of the Underworld of Paris assembled around les Halles.

CHAPTER II

GUIDES

Do you want a guide sir ?

No man who has ever been on a visit to Paris can have failed to have had these words said to him at some time or another probably several times. The guide is one of the blackest stains on Paris life. He is a guide in name only he is a friend but unto himself and his philosophy consists in swindling his patron to the utmost of his bent. The guide is the *agent de liason* as it were between the seeker after adventure and the Underworld of Paris. His happy hunting ground is around the Place de l'Opéra but you will find him anywhere between the corner of the Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin and the corner of the Rue Scribe. He hovers between a world famous tourist agency at the corner of the Avenue de l'Opera and an English bank which is opposite. Inside the agency's office there is a printed notice warning visitors that the guides who stand outside have nothing at all to do with the agency. The agency of course is in no way responsible for the pests who waylay unwary persons and the management say they can do nothing to do away with the men who buttonhole one outside.

Many times the police have been approached to put down the nuisance but they will only act when they can catch a guide guilty of a misdemeanour and the guide is very very seldom caught. They appear to act singly but in reality they form one of the greatest unions for evil which exist in Paris. And if one could put into words the amount of ruination these men have caused the result would be startling.

Blackmail and theft are but two of the crimes of which they are guilty. They were pests before the war and during hostilities they preyed on officers on leave in Paris. Since the war they have redoubled their activities and

the public hears but seldom of their crimes, for the simple reason that their victims, who are often married men shun publicity. In all my experience of Paris I have never found a guide who was of French birth. They are practically all Russian Poles, some of whom have acquired French or American nationality. If a would be patroniser of a guide would only look with seeing eyes at these men's shifty appearance, their unhealthy, greasy, bestial faces, he would turn away in disgust, and the guide would have to do something else for a living. Were it not so tragic, it would be comic indeed that these men should have the impertinence to offer their services as guides to Paris. They know nothing and care less about the historical and architectural beauties of the French capital. Their one idea is to get as much money out of you as possible and to get it as quickly as possible. The only places they can guide you to—the only places they want to guide you to—are the licensed houses of ill-fame. Should you ask them to take you to see any historical monument they will accept with alacrity. Then you will see what happens.

They will make any kind of an excuse to temporise; they will suggest that you take some refreshment before you start. They will whisper alluring suggestions of pretty ladies. They will produce photographs. If you agree to take some refreshment with them they will walk away with you to one of the many houses in the neighbourhood. They will sit very quietly with you while you spend money. Their questions to you will appear harmless. They will ask casually where you are staying, they will do their best to learn your name and your home address and they will most certainly ask if you are married. Beware, my friends, beware of your replies. If the guide sees there is nothing more to be got out of you, he will suggest leaving and for his "services" he will ask a very modest fee. But he collects a percentage from the patron on what you have spent in the house. That

the most innocent manner the guide has of making money. He is a good judge of character, and if he thinks you are too strongminded to be blackmailed you will hear no more of him. But if on the other hand, he has

collected enough information about you, and thinks he can make some more money, you will find him one fine morning at your hotel.

He will be full of smiles and greetings, and will probably open the conversation by telling you that he is temporarily embarrassed for funds. If that does not bring any offer of financial assistance from you, he will change his manner and suggest that your family or your friends might like to hear details of your little wall with him. If you do not fall into the trap he will leave you, muttering threats.

But the guide is always on the lookout for the man who is of an adventurous turn of mind. In the preliminary conversation with you the guide will sound you about your knowledge of Paris. If he sees that vice in the everyday sense of the word, makes no appeal to you, he will be ever ready with some other proposals, all of which he intends to turn into money for himself. Here is a story, every word of which I vouch for.

One winter's morning, about two years before the war, a tall young man came staggering out of the Madeleine Church in Paris. He fell, rather than walked, down the steps to the street, and then staggered about the pavement in a manner in which men usually behave when they have drunk of strong waters. Passers-by stopped to giggle, a crowd rapidly gathered, and then the inevitable policeman appeared. He took in the situation at a glance—or thought he did—and curled his lip sarcastically. Here was another of those young English visitors who had come to Paris to have a good time and enjoy himself, and who had got drunk in the process. But the young man was neither English nor drunk. He was taken to the police-station, where he told a most remarkable story. So remarkable was the story, that a prominent official from the Sureté (the French Scotland Yard) was sent for. Then an interpreter was fetched, and eventually a telephone message was sent to the office of the Canadian High Commissioner, requesting the despatch of an official. This was the story the young man told.

He was a Canadian who had dealt in real estate and had made money. He decided on a visit to Europe

He took a ticket to London, where he spent a little time, and then he made up his mind to visit the South of France. He had never visited Paris so he decided to travel over night from London and to spend a few hours in Paris before his train left for the South in the evening. He came via the Newhaven-Dieppe route, and arrived at the St. Lazare station in the early hours of the morning. He put his luggage in the cloakroom at the station, and put the receipt in his pocket-book alongside a considerable sum of money he had in notes. Then he walked out of the station, intending to see Paris. His footsteps led him, as they have led so many other people to the Place de l'Opéra, which for all intents and purposes may be compared to Piccadilly Circus. He stopped and gazed for some minutes at the wonderful pile which is the Paris Opera House, and then what more natural than he should start to walk down the Avenue de l'Opéra?

Passing the tourist agency office which I have already mentioned, he was accosted by a guide—an early bird out to catch the early worm. The guide spun off his usual piece about pretty ladies but it evoked no acceptive response from the young Canadian. However, the idea of hiring a guide was not averse to the young man who very sagely thought that as he had but a few hours to spend in Paris he might just as well put himself in the hands of a responsible person who knew Paris, who knew the ropes and who could take him around and show him the sights.

The guide, seeing that his prospective client was likely to slip through his fingers if he continued his talk about pretty ladies changed his tactics and becoming immensely serious said: 'What would you like to see sir?' The young Canadian thought for a moment and then replied that he would like to see some Apaches. Probably the memory of some story he had read in a home newspaper had flashed across his mind. The guide did not smile. Here was manna dropped straight from Heaven. The guide thought his lucky star was indeed in the ascendant. He looked the young man over and summed him up.

'Of course I can take you to see some Apaches, but it costs rather a lot of money,' he said. The Canadian answered that it did not matter, as he had plenty of

money he was here on a holiday, and requested to be taken to the Apaches as quickly as possible

The guide now quite sure of his prey called a cab and gave an address which the Canadian did not understand. They drove some way and then stopped in front of a house and went up-stairs to the third floor where the guide opened the door with a key. They entered an ordinary poorly furnished room. There was nothing much there but two or three chairs and a table. The guide told his companion to sit down which the Canadian did. Then he was invited to take a drink and accepted. The guide said "I suppose you would like some whiskey?" The young man assented. The guide continued "I don't drink whiskey myself but I'll take something else."

He then went to a cupboard and took out two bottles and two glasses. He poured out a stiff drink of whiskey and handed it to his companion. "Drink that," he said. They clinked glasses in the French fashion and the next thing the Canadian knew was that he was sitting on a chair in a church and feeling very ill. Drugged of course.

He had absolutely no recollection of anything after drinking his whiskey. At the police station he found that all his money had gone and also his cloakroom ticket. The police went to the St. Lazare station but of course the luggage had gone too. The Canadian was taken by detectives to the place where he had picked up the guide to try and see if he could identify him among those who were assembled there but of course he could not. He tried to give a description of the man and for him no doubt it was a very faithful description but to the police it might have been a word picture of any of the dozen men that hang about outside the agency office.

With no money and no friend and no clothes, the young Canadian was a rather forlorn person. After making the necessary inquiries the High Commissioner gave him a ticket back to Canada where he returned a sadder, and it is to be hoped a wiser man.

Wisdom and sadness often go hand in hand—the morning after the night before—but it is astonishing how much

quite unnecessary suffering could be avoided by a little forethought. Men go blundering into adventure with their eyes wide open, and the consequences are often to be deplored. Once, to my certain knowledge the blundering of two young men might have had the gravest consequences for England during the Great War. It will be recalled that British Ministers were very often summoned to Paris during hostilities, and they always made their headquarters at the Hotel Crillon, which is in the Place de la Concorde. A man I know very well, the secretary of a British Minister, met with a most astounding adventure during one of these visits to Paris. He told me the story the morning after it happened and I will relate it just as he told me. It is a story which is true in every detail but I do not wish to harm my friend by giving his name.

One night during this particular visit, the British Minister was to be entertained at an official dinner at the Elysée the residence of the President of the Republic. There had been a most momentous conference in the afternoon when affairs affecting the vital interests of France and England had been discussed. Certain very important decisions were taken and they had to be made known to the British Cabinet in London. This was part of the duty of my friend the secretary. After he had received instructions from his Chief, who went away to the official dinner, my friend dined with some other members of the staff in the hotel. They had the whole evening before them, and did not know what to do. They were at a loose end. My friend had been to Paris before accompanying his Chief on official business, but he did not know the French capital well. In fact he had merely dined out in restaurants. This particular evening he thought he would devote a few hours to seeing the sights. He asked one of his friends the secretary of a minor official, to accompany him. Neither of them spoke a word of French.

They left the hotel and strolled along the Place de la Concorde to the corner of the Rue Royale where they were accosted by a guide, who I suspect had been following them. He asked them, in English, of course whether

they would like to see the sights. The two men looked at one another for a moment and consented. Without another word being spoken the guide called a taxi and gave an address. The three men entered the cab and drove to what was for two of them an unknown destination. As usual they stopped before a house in a street which neither of the two Englishmen knew. The cab was dismissed and the three men went upstairs. My friend told me he was not at all suspicious of anything extraordinary being about to happen. He merely thought himself rather foolish for following an unknown man but thinking the matter would soon be closed he continued climbing the stairs wondering all the time what he was going to see.

The guide stopped saying "Here we are" and rang the bell of a flat. The door was immediately opened by a woman. They were invited to walk like flies into the parlour. They went into an ordinary sitting room and sat down. They heard the guide talking outside the room to the woman. Then the door shut and there was silence. The two men looked at each other rather uncomfortably and wondered what was going to happen. While they were thinking about it a woman opened the door and walked into the room.

She was not a nice looking woman. I am told but she was nicely dressed in a walking costume. She wore a hat. Without any preliminary beating about the bush she said in excellent English "I want ten thousand francs." The first impulse of the two men was to laugh. It seemed so intensely funny that a woman whom they had never seen before should ask for ten thousand francs but one look at the woman's face was enough. It was quite evident that it was no laughing matter. She was in dead earnest.

My friend spoke up and said "Why should we give you ten thousand francs? What for? Send our guide in here immediately."

The woman said in reply "I will give you ten minutes to think it over" and left the room locking the door after her. Many and many a time since my friend told me of his adventure have I thought over the case and

wondered whether the people who were keeping these two men to ransom were aware of the rank of their prisoners. I have come to the conclusion that they were not, otherwise, they would have adopted quite different methods of procedure. But try and visualise the situation. Here was the secretary of a British Minister with secrets affecting millions of his fellow countrymen locked in his breast, locked in a room in a house and street which he had never seen before. His first thought was to shout for help and his second thought was to keep quite quiet. They talked the matter over between them, and decided to bargain with their captress. They were counting their money when she came back into the room.

"Well," she said, 'have you made up your minds to hand over those ten thousand francs?' My friend explained that they did not possess that amount of money. 'Eh bien,' said the woman calmly, 'give me all you have on you.' She stood over them while they emptied their pocket books. Then they picked up their hats and walked to the door which the woman opened and closed again the moment they were on the outside of it. They went downstairs to the street. It was pitch dark, no lights being allowed in Paris on account of air raids. They could not see the number of the house, and when they got to the corner of the street the blue enamel plate which is always to be found at the corner of every street in Paris it was too high for them to read the name stated there in the dark. They thought of looking for a policeman, but not being able to speak a word of French, they decided that that would not be any good. So they walked about until they found a cab, drove back to the Hotel Crillon and had to borrow the money to pay their fare.

My friend asked my advice, but I told him the best thing to do was to drop the whole matter. They had lost a considerable sum of money but I knew that if they informed the police, the French newspapers would have got hold of the story, the money would never have been recovered and the police would never have discovered the authors of the outrage. My advice was taken.

A stupid and banal story if you like, but you must

remember that the chief figure in it was the secretary of a Minister. My friend asked me as I daresay many of my readers will ask themselves whether it was likely that they were the victims of a plot of any kind. I do not think so. Guides loiter outside the best known hotels and in all probability this particular guide was merely on the lookout for some well-dressed Englishman from whom, by hook or by crook, a considerable sum of money might be obtained. One of my chief reasons for coming to this conclusion is the fact that several of the Paris guides were as I have indicated in another chapter, implicated in espionage cases and if he had known the identity of his victims matters would have gone hard with them and it is quite possible that they would never have returned alive to their hotel.

In one other curious adventure brought about by two men listening to the wiles of a Paris guide I myself played a part. I had a friend from London staying with me over the Easter holidays. He was returning to London the next morning and as it was his last night in Paris I had agreed to stay up late with him and visit some of the all night cafés in Montmartre.

We were walking up the Rue Pigalle about two o'clock in the morning and passing a house on the right hand side, nearly at the top of the hill I thought I heard some faint shouting. We stopped and listened but could hear nothing. We were about to continue our walk when we distinctly heard a shout. A voice appeared to be crying for help and the voice was unmistakably English. We retraced our footsteps and listened intently. There was again silence, and then again we heard the poignant cry, and this time we traced the shouting as coming through an iron grating in the pavement. We looked up at the house which was all in darkness. Then we rang the bell.

There was no reply. Again and again we rang, and eventually the door opened just ajar. The concierge, who in all French apartment houses, sleeps in a little room near the main door, had released the pneumatic spring which had opened the door. We went inside, leaving the door open behind us.

"Concierge, concierge!" I shouted. A muffled, sleepy voice asked me what I wanted. I said I wanted to speak to the concierge. The voice told me to go away and shut the door, otherwise the police would be called.

"It is I who will call the police if you don't come here immediately," I said.

There were fresh grumblings and mutterings, and then the little glass door opened, and a man came out holding in his hand a very serviceable looking revolver. "Somewhere downstairs in one of your cellars there is an Englishman being held there by force," I said. The concierge said I was mad, and told me I had better go away, once again saying he would call the police. It was only by adopting a firm attitude that I made him bring a candle and consent to accompany my friend and myself down into the cellars. We went down, the three of us, the concierge in front with a candle in one hand and his revolver in the other. When we arrived in the underground passage we heard shouting coming seemingly from some distance away. My friend and I began to shout saying that we were English. We groped our way along a long winding passage lit only by the light of the fluttering candle, and guiding ourselves by the shouts. At last we came to a door.

An ordinary thick oaken door, one of many on both sides of the passage. It was locked with a padlock. We were nonplussed for the moment, but the concierge, who by this time was in a terrible fright, looked at the padlock and said it was an ordinary one which had been put on a long time ago by the landlord, and that he possessed a duplicate key which he would go and fetch.

In a few moments he was back with the key. He opened the door and we stumbled into what had been at some previous time a coal cellar. Right against the wall and directly underneath the iron grating, were two young men, both of them in evening dress. The concierge looked as if he saw ghosts. The two Englishmen followed us out of the cellar, went upstairs with us, and there in the hall of the house, told us their story.

They had come over to Paris for a lark. They had spent some very happy days and nights but they wanted

to see some of the Underworld of Paris before they left. They had been accosted by a guide who took them out here there and everywhere. They both agreed they had taken a little too much to drink so when the guide invited them to go somewhere where they would obtain a real glimpse of the Underworld they were game. They as usual had no idea where they were going. He took them to the house where we had found them and they went into a very nice flat where a woman came to talk to them. They were impatient to get on and see the Underworld but the woman and the guide kept on pressing them to drink. Then they were suddenly asked for money—a lot of money. They said quite truthfully that they had hardly any money left. They had spent it all. Then spoke the guide. You will give me a note he said instructing your hotel to pay the bearer the sum indicated.

I'll see you in Hades first one of the Englishmen replied.

Then both the guide and the woman hurried out of the room and locked the door but they were not gone two minutes. They returned with three other men who rushed at the two surprised Englishmen quickly overpowered them and carried them kicking and fighting downstairs and thrust them into the cellar with the parting remark. We will come back for you to-morrow when you have had time to come to your senses. But we shall have that money. They said they had shouted for hours before we came to their rescue.

When the tale was finished I questioned the concierge. He swore he knew nothing about the matter and I believed him. He confessed that many of the flats in the building were let furnished and that there were some very rough customers. You know what Montmartre is *m'sieu* he said with a shrug. I did know what Montmartre is—and the Underworld therein—but here I thought was an opportunity of running the people who had committed the outrage to earth.

I was provided with my *coupe fil* the little piece of paste board which is a police pass and which gives the holder the right to a front seat at the Drama of Life. I

had many friends at the Prefecture of Police, and knew several men whose duty it is to survey the occupants of the furnished flats of Paris. Quickly I told the two men we had rescued what I intended to do.

"Don't do anything of the kind, please," said one of the two ruefully. "I don't want anything to be known of this scrape." He gave me his card. I glanced at it and recognised the name.

"You are . . . " I began.

"Yes," he replied simply.

He was the son of the then Lord Mayor of London.

CHAPTER III

LA PARISIENNE

SOME little time before I began to write this chapter I was walking down the Rue Royale and passing the famous restaurant Maxim's I saw two nuns sitting on the restaurant terrace drinking beer

I suppose the restaurant in the Rue Royale is one of the most famous in the world and there is no doubt but that its name is intimately associated with night life dancing music and the popping of champagne corks To see two sweet faced nuns Sisters of St Vincent and St Paul in their grey cloaks and black burnous sitting there was comic and perhaps a little tragic Others by their covert smiles must have thought so too

The explanation of how the nuns came to be in such a spot is very simple It was a very hot afternoon They had been collecting alms and visiting the sick and were very thirsty so they sat down to drink a cool glass of beer To the pure all is pure they say and the nuns knew naught of their surroundings

I take the two nuns sitting outside Maxim's as a text for this section of my book in which I intend to treat of the women of Paris It is somewhat difficult to dismiss in one section that out of which a whole book might well be made

Once I was asked What is a Parisienne? My questioner meant to inquire Where is the woman most typical of Paris to be found? Is she the little midinette trotting down the Rue de la Paix with a band box hanging over her arm or is she the tall and stately mannequin who with queenly tread threads her way through the dressmakers salons? Maybe she is the tall and handsome woman who adorns the revue stage of Paris or is the Parisienne the mysterious She whom we see in the street walking swiftly a dainty creature

from the crown of her pretty hat to the toe of her smart patent leather shoes?

Which is the Parisienne? If I were allowed to say, "They are all Parisiennes" then I would be content. For I believe they all are of the type which we label "Parisienne." But if you will not permit the generality, then I must fall back and crave your permission to expound my theory that the mysterious She is the one who most comes up to the standard type.

The She was born with one object in life—marriage. That is still the alpha and omega of the Frenchwoman's life. They do not yet sit on juries or vote in elections. Their education is better than the majority of English or American women, but they are bred and brought up in surroundings which are almost Oriental. A young French girl of decent family never goes out unaccompanied until she marries. A maid takes her and fetches her from school, her music and her painting lessons.

There are few French theatres to which a young girl may go and it is only during very recent years that she has been allowed to play tennis with males and when she does, it is just the same as when she dances—her mother sits and watches her chicks. The French girl has a *dol* and on the amount of this depends the grade of her marriage which is arranged between the two families in the same way as any business transaction. It is just a question of barter.

Then comes the wedding, and liberty for the wife. She can now do as she likes. She rules her house or rather her flat, with a rod of iron. She does her own marketing. Her husband expects her to be gay or serious according to his mood and she is. She must know more than a little of his business, and in nine cases out of ten she takes an active part in it. She attends the theatre with her husband about once a week. This and perhaps a visit to the racecourse now and then constitutes her amusements.

She is happy. She is a good mother and a good wife. Her existence is a little humdrum perhaps but she does not know it. She has two children a boy and a girl and you cannot imagine her having none or three. Her

husband comes home just as she is finishing putting the children to bed. She is now more a mother than the gay, provoking coquetting woman her husband married, but as they leave the children's bedroom together the mantle drops, and as they sit down facing one another across the dining room table, she is once more "la belle Parisienne."

Go a little higher in the scale, in the circles known as the Faubourg St. Germain, and you will find less of the true Parisienne type for so many of the impoverished French aristocrats have married wives of foreign nationality, and their society is as colourless and international as, say, Fifth Avenue and Mayfair.

Go a little lower in the scale and you come to the women from whom the Underworld recruits its female population. In this strata of society the women always work. They begin when they are quite small, and when they marry they continue. They have to seek joy where they can. Life for them is a very serious business indeed.

Wages among the lower middle classes and the lower classes in France are exceedingly bad. Of course they have increased, in many cases trebled since the war but the cost of living has also gone upwards, and stayed up. Therefore the married couples and those who have not thought it necessary to bother either the mayor or the church have both of them to go out to work. They rarely have children. It is only the middle classes and the very poor classes who have offspring in France.

Even, as in some instances if the woman does not go out to work she does all the work of the home alone washing, cooking, making her own clothes and hats, saving and scraping, keeping herself smart and attractive looking, making dainty meals for her husband and taking simple pleasures with him on Sunday afternoons and the national holidays.

You see them arm in arm on the boulevards, walking slowly, stopping to look in the shop windows which adorn the streets. When they are tired and thirsty they sit down outside some humble café. They obtain their fill of amusement by watching the passing of the world.

and his wife, and often they catch sight of a woman whose clothes have cost more than their annual income.

Love of luxury, or perhaps it would be better to say a striving after a little luxury, has brought many French women into the Underworld. A moment's hesitation when faced with temptation—and then the dregs of the cup of Life. Temptation surrounds women on all sides in Paris. The workgirls feed their overheated little brains on novelettes which deal with Life in a manner which would not be permitted in England or America. The words 'lover' and 'mistress' occur frequently.

Frequently, of course, Virtue is persecuted throughout the novel and triumphs in the last chapter, but between the paper covers there is much that is frank, and spades are called spades and not shovels. In other books there is no pretence of making Virtue triumphant, love and laughter and the gospel of 'having a good time' are the texts.

The *midinette* drinks it all in and returns to her home, which is often lacking in the most elementary comforts. Novelette succeeds novelette. Instinctively the little *midinette* looks round the streets on her way home to catch sight of the Fairy Prince. In the Metro or in the omnibus he may be waiting for her, she thinks. If she is pretty and attractive she will not have long to wait for her Prince. She will find him in the Rue de la Paix as she comes tripping out from the workshop.

An *aférinist* in a café is but the stepping stone to little dinners and perhaps a theatre or two. The *midinette* is then like a ripe plum waiting to be plucked. Afterwards comes disillusion and sorrow.

Perhaps the girl will drift from lover to lover, going on working at the dressmaker's and living at home, but very often she shakes loose the shackles which bind her and casts herself adrift. The yawning abyss of the Underworld confronts her and she is swallowed up. She joins the ranks of the sisterhood of lost souls who ply their trade on the boulevards and in the cafés.

Apart from the love of luxury, there is another great factor in the life of a Parisienne, no matter from what class she may spring. This factor is Love. Love to a

Frenchwoman is a very great adventure indeed. It is not the kind of love of which English girls dream—the holding of hands in cinemas, the exchange of kisses, the walks and talks which end in marriage. Love in the life of a Frenchwoman means passion—it is the kind of love which burns fiercely, passion calls to passion before the flame flickers out.

Hundreds of married women have lovers. Sometimes the lovers are bachelors, sometimes they are married men. But it matters not which they are, the end is the same. A liason will continue for years, sometimes for a whole lifetime. Quite often however it is an affair of months or merely weeks. The married woman discreetly veiled will pass what they call in French *de cinq à sept* in the rooms and arms of the loved one. The hours from five to seven in the afternoon are consecrated to the worship of Cupid.

A Frenchman must have female society—at least a couple of hours of his day must be spent in the worship of Woman. Look round Paris and you will find that the city is a jewelcase wherein Woman reclines as a goddess seeking worship. The Rue de la Paix with its dress makers and milliners and jewellers exists for only one thing—Woman. The smart restaurants of the boulevards could not live were it not for women. Then there are the establishments in the Bois and discreet little hotels but a few miles from Paris. They all look to Woman and her worshippers for their existence. The little Cupid who presides over the fountain in Piccadilly Circus would be more at home in the Place Vendôme. Paris is the home town of Love.

Love is sometimes mercenary, for there is a proverb in French which says: In love there is always one who loves and the other who lets himself be loved. The mannequin who has her little flat and a maid, the minor actress who has a small house, they let themselves be loved. And sad to relate the titular lover is not always the one who stands first in the heart and mind of the damsel. More often than not the man who supplies the flat and the accessories is supplanted by the *amant de cœur*.

that their lovers are untrue to them nevertheless they go on supplying them with money in the fear that the man will leave them

Apart from the chasseurs and waiters there are thousands of others who live respectable lives although they derive their means of livelihood through channels leading to the Underworld. The hotels and *maisons meublées* which I have already mentioned employ hundreds of men and women as chambermaids and valets. They spend long hours as the handmaidens of vice but their hands remain undefiled by the pitch. They come to Paris buxom country wenches with the bloom of the country on their cheeks. Their faces soon lose the bloom and although they soon find a lover—Love as I have already said being a great adventure in every French woman's life—they remain respectable according to the French standard of morals.

Take again the case of the theatre girls and the girls employed in the taking of films. In the most cynical way in the world the managers refuse to pay a living wage. They know it is not necessary because they can get thousands of girls who come to them by reason of the glamour of the life.

Almost any day in the small advertisements on the back page of the Paris daily newspapers you will find a two line advertisement asking for *figurantes* or in English 'show girls'. And if you take the trouble to pass by the stage door of the theatre which is advertising you will find a long line of applicants although they know only too well that the pay will not keep them in silk stockings.

Perhaps not one of these show girls has a rich lover and a motor car as is imagined by the writer of the novelette so beloved by the little midinette but there is always a man in the background the man who pays.

Sometimes but very rarely in the case of the French show girls there is a man who makes the girl a monthly allowance of some kind but in the majority of cases it is just a case of the wonderful fatal man who may be a clerk or a shop assistant but who shares his income with his sweetheart.

The girl will do all the work of the tiny flat, cooking wonderful meals on a little gas stove, and in her spare time making and re-arranging her clothes. She goes to the theatre seven times a week, and there are matinees on Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays, as well as on all national holidays, but, nevertheless she finds time to look after her lover's comfort.

When the curtain falls on the last act of the revue leaving a stage full of semi-nude kicking show girls and dancers the girls make a dash up the winding stone staircases leading to the dressing rooms and there they hastily remove the grease paint and hurriedly scramble into their out-of-door clothes so that they may catch the last home going Metro and tram which brings them to the arms of their lovers.

CHAPTER IV

BLACKMAIL

ONE of the worst crimes in the Underworld of Paris is blackmail. Because Paris is the Mecca of so many thousands of travelling foreigners men and women have made the capital a centre for extorting money from those too weak minded to resist. Detectives of international reputation have told me that Paris contains more blackmailers than any other large city in the world.

French detectives have pointed out to me one of the most notorious blackmailers they have ever had to deal with. It was years ago when I first saw him but he is still up and down the boulevards living on a special form of blackmail and although he is known to the police he has not been through their hands for years, just because his victims will not prosecute.

This man is tall and well-dressed. He saunters along rather slowly. He is a Roumanian and is not good looking. His hair is now slightly grey. To those who do not know who or what he is the man gives the impression of being a simple *fâncur*. Watch him, and you will notice that he always keeps his eyes open for a pretty or well-dressed woman. He is able to pick out a foreigner at a glance.

The Roumanian will follow a woman to see at what hotel she is staying and then he will haunt the lobby until he finds an opportunity of getting into conversation with her.

Of course the man may be rebuffed but there are thousands of women and the man is content with an occasional nibble at his bait. Any woman who falls into this man's clutches will have reason to regret it.

In honeyed accents the Roumanian talks soft nothings to his victim. He poses as the good intentioned fellow, very lonely and dissipated, who is seeking the conso-

lation of conversation with a sister soul. Before making an appointment for "to-morrow," the blackmailer makes discreet inquiries around the hotel. He has learned the woman's name, and has probably learned from her own lips whether she is married or not. He has taken particular pains not to alarm the woman with too many questions, but he learns from the hotel employees all or nearly all, he wants to know.

As soon as he feels the poor fly is ready to walk into the web he suddenly changes his tactics. He drops the soft words and comes out in his true colours. Perhaps he will be in possession of a letter or two from the woman making or cancelling appointments, but when he suggests that she may not want her husband to know of the acquaintance she has formed in Paris, the most innocent letters appear in his hands weapons which may lead to the woman's undoing.

He tells her quite frankly that he needs money, and names his sum according to what he estimates the woman's means to be. If she says she has no money and has no means of obtaining the sum which the blackmailer demands, he will suggest that she removes the pearl necklace from her neck and give it to him, together with any other valuable articles of jewellery he knows she owns.

She may, of course, be sufficiently strong-minded to repulse his demands. There the matter will end. But if she hesitates and wavers, then follows disaster indeed. He will take everything she has, and with repeated threats, will make her life perfectly miserable. All these things this man has done. The police, as I have said, know of it, but cannot do anything at all unless a victim decides to prosecute, and, of course, if the Roumanian has reason to believe the police are going to take action, he makes himself scarce until the affair has blown over.

The Roumanian is not the only blackmailer of women in Paris, but I have told his story because it is perfectly well known to me and I intend it as a warning.

Fashionable resorts such as Deauville and Monte Carlo are the happy hunting grounds of the blackmailer, both male and female, and the *trains de luxe* which journey to these places are very often used as a means to enter

into relations with intended victims. There seems no harm at all in a man, who appears to be a gentleman, assisting a woman travelling alone, or alternatively in a woman travelling alone accepting the assistance of a man. But some grave cases of blackmail which have their place in the French police records had their origin in such an innocent beginning.

Shortly before the war a well-known American woman the wife of a millionaire, fell into a blackmailer's trap when travelling to Vichy. It is usual for the blackmailer to spend a considerable sum of money when he is hunting down an intended victim. He dresses well, and very often has a valet. He puts up at the most fashionable hotel of the place, and in a general way sets himself out to create an impression of affluence.

At Deauville, Monte Carlo, or at one of the half-dozen or so places where society goes in winter and summer, there are innumerable occasions to add to chance acquaintanceship made in the train, or to make fresh friendships in an hotel. The blackmailer prefers to deal with a woman alone but he does not balk when a husband is present. The husband may be in the gaming rooms, and the woman remains alone in the hotel. That is the blackmailer's opportunity, and he proceeds to work along the same lines as the Roumanian in Paris.

The woman blackmailer's work is almost the same. She will "allow" a man to assist her with her luggage, but the man does not know that it is very probable he has been followed for days by these beasts of the Underworld who have made up their minds to try and blackmail him with the skilled assistance of a woman accomplice.

The woman's stock-in-trade consists of her good looks, smart dresses and hats but she has to possess a certain amount of brains and quick wits. It is curious and worth recording that although the male blackmailer nearly always operates alone and seldom if ever has a woman companion, the female of the type rarely "works" for herself. She either has a man who receives the proceeds of the blackmailing or else she is a member of a band of criminals to whom blackmail is only one asset.

Some other blackmailers, the guides, I have referred

to elsewhere in this book, but there are still others, humble fry I will admit, who take what they can from anybody. It may be a man who blackmails another by veiled threats of disclosure, after doing everything possible to effect a compromising situation. Or it may be a woman who gets a man into her toils and who, after taking all the man gives her of his own free will, tries to obtain more by making threats.

It is quite astounding, according to the police, the number of people who are at this very moment subscribing to the upkeep of blackmailers.

During the war blackmailers found a fresh channel for their activities. Some of the weekly papers gave the hospitality of their columns to men who desired to get in touch with 'godmothers', *marraines*, as they are called. Of course, there were thousands of genuine cases, but there were many which were not and the police had a busy time getting innocent women out of serious difficulties brought about through their accepting to become *marraines*.

Needless to say the blackmailers posed as soldiers at the front.

II

A DOSS-HOUSE

THE English translation for the French slang term for "doss-house" is "rope walk." The name "rope walk" arose because when these "doss houses" were first instituted in France they consisted of a big room with a rope stretched across it. There were no berths and the poor devils had to sleep leaning up against the rope. In the early morning, when it was time to awaken the sleepers, a man would come along with a knife and slice the rope. That served as an inexpensive alarm clock.

Any Paris doss house is a human document in itself indeed the same may be said of any place for the housing

of the wrecks and castaways of humanity gathered together in any large city. But the doss houses of Paris somehow contain more stories in the journalistic sense than any others I have met with in my wanderings over the face of Europe. London may be more comfortable for the down and out and Berlin may have better organisation but Paris will always be a candle which attracts the human moth and some of these moths find their way sooner or later to the rope walk.

Take a typical house in La Villette the house will contain anything up to 150 beds. Pardon the term beds. They are just wooden shelves placed one above the other and they continue in tiers around a fairly large room. Each shelf is provided with a blanket. There are no baths no sanitary arrangements of any kind. It is just a question for a man to go to the rope walk or stay out all night sleeping at what the tramp calls the Hotel des Belles Etoiles. Sleeping under the stars is not a criminal offence in France and no man is ever charged with being without visible means of support.

The charge for sleeping in the rope walk is not dear it costs but a few sous but it is not every dead beat as the Americans call the tramp who possesses the necessary sous. Therefore you will find many human forms stretched out like dead sleeping on the benches which adorn the Paris boulevards.

In visits to the rope walks I have come across many strange creatures and one of my memories is that of listening to a man whose proudest recollection was of having once been slapped on the back by royalty and he nearly reciprocated.

I have met broken-down jockeys with European reputations sleeping in Paris doss houses. And also a man who had begun to make his name in literature.

A variety of reasons brings men to the Paris rope walks. It may be drink drugs or just a sliding down the hill after being abandoned by a woman. There are of course thousands of men who sleep in a rope walk three hundred days out of the year the odd sixty five they spend in an hotel as the French lodging houses are called.

These men do not live they just exist. You find them eking out an existence as market porters in the Halles, or doing odd jobs anywhere and everywhere. Their lives are mysterious they have abandoned ambition, if ever they possessed any, they ask nothing better than just to go on living, a little food a little more to drink, and somewhere to rest their bones is all they require. No thought of lifting themselves out of the mire ever enters their heads.

The Armée de Salut, which is French for Salvation Army, carries on its work in France just as it does in other Continental countries but there are no bands, no meetings, no organisation as there is in England. The Underworld of Paris knows naught of the existence of the Salvation Army.

It is extremely rare to find a criminal in the "rope walks." Probably the French criminal is not of the indigent class, and he is never so hard up as to have to seek the hospitality of a doss-house.

The "rope walks" of Paris are dismal places they exist for the very lowest dregs of humanity—those who cannot be helped.

III

A MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE

It is a trite saying that truth is stranger than fiction, and I might add that it is generally duller too. But there is an exception to every rule and one of them I propose to set forth now. When I began to write this book I made up my mind that I would not publish anything concerning the Underworld of Paris for the truth of which I could not vouch. A foreign correspondent hears many stories, and it is his duty to investigate them before despatching them to the newspaper he represents. Sometimes the correspondent finds it his duty to suppress certain stories in the public interest. Other stories require the most careful and painstaking investigation—and then very often they turn out to be untrue. The

story which I am going to tell in this chapter occurred to a young man whom I knew personally. I was with him two or three days before it happened. I have never seen him since and he has never been seen by either his friends or his mother. The story I think is a perfect answer to any charge of sensationalism in writing on the Paris Underworld. Luckily such mysteries are not common but they happen and the public does not often hear about them.

In a small private house in Passy a suburb of Paris there lived (and lives now) an old woman who had an only son. At the time of this occurrence he was nineteen of very slight build and not very healthy looking. He was worshipped by his mother. The woman's earlier life was somewhat of a mystery. It was known that she had lived several years in Russia and it was believed that in her youth she had been on the stage. She appeared to have a lot of money.

The boy whose name was Lucien was brought up in a private school but since his earliest days he was given large amounts of money by his doting mother. When quite young he lived a life of luxury and when he left school he was not intended for any particular career. He became a member of the band of gilded youths of Paris had two motor cars always plenty of money in his pockets and plenty of leisure in which to enjoy it. He was a youth of sober habits and was not vicious in any sort of way. He had no need to gain his living but he pretended to deal in motor cars that is to say he bought a car for his own use became tired of it or saw another which he liked better and sold it often I am sure at a considerable loss. But his mother was his banker and she never grumbled at the many calls her son made on her purse.

These details may seem superfluous but it will be seen presently that they have an important bearing on the story. Lucien spent the summer months at Deauville the winter on the Riviera and between times he enjoyed himself in Paris. In this way he became acquainted with other young men with money and undoubtedly also with others who live by their wits on the outskirts

of the former class Lucien became enamoured of a Scotch girl who lived in Paris. She was the daughter of an Edinburgh architect, and had lived for some time in Paris, earning her living in various ways. The young man became acquainted with her when she was one of several English speaking instructresses on a Paris skating rink. He introduced the girl to his mother and a more or less formal engagement was entered into. Then the war came. The girl became a hospital nurse and the young man offered his services and his motor car to the British authorities. He spoke English quite well, and worked for a while on the British front, driving his car in the Red Cross service. Then he left that work and returned to Paris biding his time when he would be called up to join the French Army. He continued his round of amusements in Paris, doing all there was to do in the French capital during war time.

The girl was living in a small flat not far from the mother's house. The boy used to see her every day, take her out quite a lot and dine with her nearly every evening. One Sunday he was to have called there in the afternoon. The girl waited for him, but he did not come. She waited until the evening, but still there was no sign of him. The next morning she went to see his mother who told her that Lucien had not been home all night. She was intensely worried, but thought her son's absence was due to some boyish prank. She waited in all day, and the girl went out to see such friends of his whose addresses she knew in order to try and discover some news of the absent one but nobody could provide any clue. He had been seen in a certain bar on the Saturday afternoon when he was in the company of a young man whom he knew but slightly. It was reported that both of them were in an advanced state of intoxication. This did not sound like Lucien's usual behaviour at all, but it provided some sort of clue although a very faint one.

The mother and the girl made up their minds to go to the police the next morning if there was no news of the lad. The next morning a note was found in the mother's letter box. It had not come through the post,

but was in the boy's handwriting. It said that he was being detained, but that no harm would happen to him if he gave his captors one hundred thousand francs. This letter made no suggestion of how the money should be sent to him. The mother took the letter to the police who surmised that another communication would be forthcoming and told the woman that she was to communicate with them as soon as she had further news. Two days later, when the mother was nearly insane with anxiety, another letter was found in the letter box. It said that unless the money was paid over the boy would never be seen alive again.

This letter, which was in a strange handwriting, told the mother how she was to pay over the money. She was to put the notes in an envelope and to go at a certain time to a Metropolitan station where she would be met by a messenger who would take the money from her, and her son would be restored to her in the evening. According to instructions the mother took the letter to the police. The Metropolitan station mentioned in the letter was the Glacière station which happens to be the most shallow of all the stations on the Paris underground railway. It is open, and there is a roadway over it spanned by a bridge. The mother who would have given all her money to have her son restored to her was, owing to the war, temporarily embarrassed for funds. She had a fairish income, but she could not possibly lay her hands on one hundred thousand francs.

She suggested to the police that she should give her son's captors all the money she could, but they would not hear of it. She was told to make up a dummy package, which she was to take to the underground station. There detectives would be on duty, and as soon as the messenger appeared he would be arrested. But the police blundered very badly. They totally forgot the bridge over the station, and the fact that anybody standing on the bridge could command the platforms beneath.

The woman went to her appointment. She stood there with the envelope plainly showing in her hand. A little boy appeared and asked "Are you the lady who has

an envelope to give me?" The mother handed over the envelope and the little boy turned to leave when two burly detectives pounced on him and placed him under arrest. Pale and trembling the little boy was marched away, between the two minions of the law and taken to the police station, the mother of the missing young man following.

It may easily be guessed what happened. The little boy was totally innocent. He said that when passing over the bridge he was stopped by a man who asked him whether he wanted to earn a couple of francs. When he replied in the affirmative he had pointed out to him the woman standing on the platform and was told to go and ask her for the envelope she was carrying. His description of the man who had accosted him was most vague. The police hastened back to the Metro station, but of course there was nobody there. As soon as the watchers or watcher had seen the messenger pounced upon, he or they made off.

The police had a severe setback, and then adopted a different line of investigation. Lucien's mother found she was being shadowed by the police, and they also followed the Scotch girl. The first the latter knew of the fact was when she was questioned by the police as to why she had a gramophone playing in her flat at ten o'clock one night. Then she found that her women friends were also being questioned. She and the mother went to the police to ask what this meant and they were bluntly told that the police suspected the mother of hiding her son with the object of his evading military service.

In vain she pointed out she had nowhere to hide him and invited the police to search her house from garret to cellar. They maintained their attitude. Afterwards they suggested the son had fled to a neutral country, but anybody who had cause to travel in wartime will remember how every journey was hedged round with red tape and all kinds of difficulties. For a young man of military age unprovided with official papers any kind of journey, even within the frontiers of France, was practically an impossibility.

Even if one admits the French police theory and adds to it that Lucien managed to cross one of the mountain paths into Spain or Switzerland, there remains the vital question of money with which to live. Lucien had no trade or profession, and could speak no language but French and English. If he had taken refuge in a neutral country his mother would have had to send him money, and to get even the smallest sums out of France was a tremendous undertaking involving much time spent in interviewing bureaucratic officials.

Lucien's mother, when she found she could not obtain any assistance from the official police, placed the matter in the hands of a private detective agency, which eventually admitted itself baffled.

There the matter ended. It is now nearly four years since Lucien disappeared. To the best of my knowledge and belief neither the mother nor the fiancée ever heard of him again. What happened to him? Does he live or did his captors become frightened and put him to death to cover up their tracks?

The answer to this problem is one of the secrets of the Underworld of Paris.

CHAPTER V

DOPE

A WARM and scented breeze comes through the palm trees, it is tinged with the sweet smell of mimosa. The sun is hot. It might be July, but it is January. I am writing this chapter in the South of France. For years I have been studying the drug habit and its effect on the Underworld of Paris. As a student of life and a journalist I have visited many 'dope' shops. Almond-eyed Chinese have offered me opium, I have smoked it, too, in a backwater off Baker Street, London. I know something of bakish and its effect on mankind. Cocaine "snow" to Americans and Canadians, "coco" to the French I have met with in many circumstances. Morphine, and many other drugs have come under my notice while passing in and out of the Underworld. And here am I in one of the most beautiful spots of Southern France writing about "dope."

But it is not quite as ridiculous as it sounds. I have collected a bookful of cuttings and notes. This book I have with me for reference purposes. But for quite another reason there is less humour in writing about "dope" in the Underworld—from a seat in sunny climes—than might be imagined. Not very many miles west of me is Toulon and Toulon is the greatest centre for the distribution of drugs in France. Of course all ports like Cherbourg and Brest have their drug traffic, but Toulon, and in a lesser degree Marseille, because they are the ports dealing with sea traffic from the East are the predestined doors of entry for opium.

Take a walk any night along the waterfront of Toulon take it, that is if you do not value your life. It is like walking into a nightmare with your senses fully awake. A man comes staggering out of a house, above the doorway of which burns a red lantern. He is obviously of the seaman type; he is big and brawny. But to-night his

eyes are glassy and his footsteps uncertain His hands are plunged deeply into his trouser pockets His chin is buried in his chest as he zigzags across the pavement Look there, just behind him Slinking along in the shadows are two shapes With noiseless tread and with something feline about them, they are tracking the drunken sailor I say drunken advisedly, but the glassy eye is the "high sign" of the man who has been drugged When the man staggers outside the radius of an electric light the two followers are on him in a flash Quicker than the eye can follow, a knife is whipped out of the sleeve of one of the two attackers Just a flash, that is all, then a gurgle, and the seaman falls on his back on the pavement Other seamen are reeling about the streets, singing and shouting and quarrelling with women, but everybody is too much taken up with their own affairs to bother about the little drama which is being played right out in a street on the waterfront of Toulon

While the seaman is prostrate the two thugs run their practised hands over their victim It does not take a minute Then they swear and kick him in the ribs Hurriedly they slink away You see there was nothing left for the jackals the lions in the 'dope house' had had it all

My friend the Chief of Police at Toulon has given me little glimpses into the Underworld of the town Here is a short story written down just as it was told to me

Two French sailors came ashore together at Toulon The man-o-war which bore them home had been on an Eastern station since two years One sailor was young, fair and handsome, his companion was dark and swarthy They had visited many drink shops together, but whereas drink only seemed to make the younger one merry, it served to render his companion quarrelsome Arm in arm and singing they came upon a house all lit up and with the sinister red lamp burning outside 'Why! There's old Mother Helene's place, let's go in for a drink' said the dark one The fair and merry member of the party was nothing loth, and they entered, never dreaming of the tragedy which was waiting for them on the other side of the door

La Mère Helene was glad to see them, as she was glad to see all sailors who had money in their pockets. La Mère was a fat old woman in a dirty pink peignour. She knew how to receive her guests; she put a bottle and two glasses on the table and left the sailors. They drank of the potent liquor, which only made one merrier and the other more angry. Then they got up and wandered into an adjoining room. This was an oblong apartment with three tiers of berths all round it. About one half of them were occupied by seamen of all nations. Malays, Chinese Lascars, French, British and American sailors were there in various stages of stupor. Some were stretched on their backs, their eyes open and staring into space, their bodies in a squalid room in a street off the waterfront of Toulon, but their souls floating through an artificial paradise where most wonderful and delightful things were happening.

Not all the men, however, were in this state of beatitude. From some berths came raucous voices, uplifted in some roaring sea chanty. Others were swearing and shouting gibberish. In some of the lower berths two or three men were in the earlier stages. Beside them were low wooden tables on which stood lamps. A nondescript man half Chunk, half Malay, rolled the 'pills' of opium, stuck a long wire pin into them, and held them in the flame of a lamp until they glowed like charcoal. Then the 'pills' were inserted into the tiny bowls of the pipes, and so on to oblivion.

The sailors stood on the threshold looking half contemptuously at this familiar scene which they had remarked many times before in towns out East. They heard the strains of a mechanical piano coming from another room. Here was music and laughter and the strident cries of women. The two sailors were more in the mood for this sort of fun so they lurched off in pursuit of it. They pushed open a door and entered a room full of smoke. Through the haze they saw about two dozen men and half that number of women. The men were all sailors. The women were in *debâcle* which they covered with loose flowing peignours of many hues. A few couples were dancing to the strains of the

piano Around the room were sitting men and women smoking and drinking Most of the men were drunk but none of the women

For a few moments the sailors stood taking in the scene and then the younger made a sudden forward movement darting across the room and laying a brawny hand on a young girl's arm The girl who had been sitting smoking with a sailor paled visibly and jumped to her feet For a few terse moments the couple stood staring at one another then without a word the sailor drew her into a corner Nobody had remarked the meeting but the dark young sailor who seemed rather taken with the girl now in deep conversation with the man

How came thee here Rose? asked the sailor sternly

The girl answered quickly Where then should I go after thou forsook me?

Briefly she told her story The dullness of life in that little Brittany village a handsome stranger
a promise Paris and the bright lights
a child and solitude

Jacques the fair young sailor listened intently apparently with remorse Just then his companion who had continued drinking furtively lurched across the room and bearing down on Rose invited her to dance The girl shook her head scornfully

Go thou away Charles said Jacques Rose and I are old friends we want to talk

Quickly Charles mood turned to anger I will dance with her I will he shouted After all what is she here for?

But beckoning to the girl Jacques slipped out into the passage

We can talk better outside he said Drawing her peignoir round her Rose followed the sailor into the street As they stood talking quietly beneath the lamp-post a *sergent de ville* passed winked at the girl and proceeded on his way

The street door was left wide open and the light from the house shone out on to the pavement the tinkling piano could be heard plainly There was a sudden shadow and Charles appeared quickly followed by La Mere

Helene, who seemed to be trying to appease him. He seized Rose roughly by the shoulder and flung her round. "Will you dance now?" he screamed. Rose smiled and shook her head. Infuriated like an angry bull Charles drew a long knife from a pocket and plunged it in Rose's side. Without a murmur she fell into Jacques' arms. Just then came the measured tread of the returning policeman.

The three live actors in the drama stood still frozen with horror. The piano struck up a tango, and as the policeman came round the corner Jacques holding the corpse of Rose tightly to him began to dance. *La Mère Helene* slid up to the policeman and commenced to wheedle him.

"Voyon, M. l'Agent. Look then at my eccentrics, they must dance in the open air. La la look at them, monsieur, un petit verre, monsieur. Pas ici, monsieur, pas ici."

The piano tinkled on. Jacques with his gruesome partner danced up the street.

Charles slunk away in the shadows.

* * * * *

Last year a bill was drafted to deal with the opium traffic in France. There are already penalties but it is agreed that they are not strong enough. The French police know that they will have to cleanse the seaports. It was at Toulon that Captain Ullmo, the French naval officer, began to smoke opium, a vice that led him into the arms of an unscrupulous woman, who caused him to sell naval secrets to a foreign Power—a crime for which he was court martialled and sentenced to imprisonment for life.

Not only at Toulon, but at Nice, it is possible to purchase opium in innocent looking shops whose trade it is to sell Chinese antiques. At Cherbourg, Brest and other ports, various demi-mondaines, very often in the pay of foreign countries have luxuriously fitted flats, here opium parties are given and naval officers made welcome.

From the ports the vice of opium smoking spread to Paris and was quickly adopted. But it costs dear to be

an opium smoker in the Gay City. A well lined pocket-book is not in itself an open-sesame to an opium den. An opium smoker requires beautiful surroundings. There must be wonderful Oriental decorations, magnificent hanging Chinese lamps, soft divans and Eastern carpets and curtains. The people who run the opium dens in Paris do not count upon the ordinary members of the Underworld for their customers. There are always a sufficient number of retired Colonial officials and naval officers who can be relied upon. But these people have not sufficient money to satisfy the lust of the opium den people who have to attract a different sort of customer with money. This is a rather difficult and somewhat dangerous proceeding because there is always the possibility that the new and unknown may talk too much and let the cat out of the bag.

An ordinary way of getting in touch with a new customer is as follows. You will be sitting in a carriage on the underground railway. On some pretext or other an elegantly dressed woman sitting opposite you will engage you in conversation and before she leaves the carriage she will slip a card into your hand. You will read

MADAME BERTHA
PIPES & SMOKERS UTENSILS,
RUE UNTEL 6

Second door on right

"Pipes and smokers' utensils" will mean nothing to you unless you are an opium fiend, but if you are—

Another way of obtaining customers for opium dens is through the medium of classified advertisements in newspapers. Several weekly newspapers contain announcements couched in similar language to the words used on the little slip of pasteboard the lady handed you in the train.

There are two quarters of Paris mostly favoured by opium smokers the Champs de Mars district and the Champs Elysees. Around the Avenue Bosquet and the Avenue General Dénie you will notice luxurious

automobiles draw up alongside the curb. Watch the people who alight from these cars. You will find them rather pale, very thin, and with a feverish look in their rather staring eyes. One after another they enter a very ordinary looking house. Follow them. They go no further than the first floor—opium dens are never very high up.

Unless you are taken there by someone who has been before, you will not be admitted. You will be requested to pay a fee of five louis (100 francs). Then you will be taken to a room containing at most two or three beds, sometimes couches or divans. Then you will prepare for your journey to an artificial paradise. A table and a lamp are placed beside you, deft hands prepare the "pills."

Other dens are to be found around the Etoile, near the corner of the little streets which run into the Avenue de la Grande Armée. Already the Paris police possess a special service known as the *Brigade des Sûrifiants*, but it is not nearly large enough to cope with the opium traffic, to say nothing of the cocaine and morphia, about which I shall have something to say presently.

Opium is becoming rarer and rarer. They say it is worth its weight in gold, and like gold in France, it simply cannot be found except by the people who know the right password. Because of its rarity, quite well-known opium smokers in Paris have sought and found "ersatz opium" and some of them appear quite satisfied with the substitute which they smoke as they smoked the real opium—stretched full length on low cushions and wearing exotic pyjamas.

An artist well known in Paris theatre-land smokes a mixture made of an equal proportion of American English and French tobacco mixed in rosewater with a few grains of real opium. He says he obtains the same results.

A Parisian countess, nicknamed "*la Fumeuse d'Opium*" smokes the same mixture plus a little *poivre d'encens*. Other Parisians are obtaining their opium from an old Jew who has a herb shop in the Calle Montaner in Barcelona. What the secret of the herb is no one

knows but it gives off a perfumed scent and crackles in the pipe while being smoked. So much for opium, which, after all, is not much sought after in the Underworld of Paris.

With cocaine, however, it is different. It is everybody's secret that in Montmartre there is a tremendous daily traffic in drugs—mostly cocaine. From bar to bar and from café to café go men and women of the Underworld dealing with a clientèle which increases every day, and I will go so far as to affirm that at the moment of penning these lines there is not a single well known habitue of Montmartre who is not addicted to either opium, morphia or cocaine. It is rather terrifying but nevertheless true. And because the drugs pass from hand to hand they are difficult to seize.

Dr Taulmann, a French drug specialist, said to me: "You can't imagine the quantity of drugs circulating in Montmartre, nor the ease with which drug fiends satisfy their desires. We know where the opium comes from, and if the police want to seize it, they must watch the ports. But to put down the traffic in cocaine is a more difficult matter. To-day artists, musicians and political men take drugs in order to obtain moments of exaltation without which they say they cannot work."

"Cocaine is the greatest danger. You find it everywhere. I may say that if opium is the favourite drug of the intellectual classes, cocaine is king of the Underworld. Opium rarely kills, but every day cocaine takes its toll of victims."

At the moment of writing a large amount of cocaine is coming across the frontier from Germany. There no doctor's prescription is necessary to obtain it from a chemist and smuggling cocaine through the French Customs is not difficult.

Numerous *petites femmes* of Montmartre—to say nothing of other quarters of Paris—believe that the inhaling of cocaine leads to forgetfulness of Cupid's poisoned darts. 'Paradise lost, Paradise regained' is, in effect, their excuse. Others, however, seek no excuse at all, their friends take it so they think they will too. Marcelle takes it, so therefore must Ernestine. And the *petites*

semms do not find it so expensive. Ten francs a gramme, six francs a half gramme. "Why," they say, "it is for nothing."

But all that glistens white is not cocaine, often it is but an "ersatz" after all. Sometimes it is bicarbonate of soda, sometimes boracic powder and often nothing else than ordinary cooking salt! Until the sugar shortage, candied sugar was often substituted for cocaine. But the ravages that real cocaine makes among the beauties of the Underworld! Comely faces become pale and drawn, and once flashing eyes soon take on the look which 'gives away' a cocaine fiend.

Ether also has its devotees. A famous actress at one of the boulevard theatres was notorious for the ether she consumed but it soon dragged her down to the Underworld. The smell of it impregnates the breath for forty-eight hours after one has taken it. Chemists have experimented with ether and have fabricated a perfumed mixture known as "Jy," and in fact it is on record that a well known scent manufacturer is going to place on the market a series of scents to be known as *parfums d'illusion*.

An actress, whose charms have been sung in verse by Claude Mendès inhales ammonia and she affirms that ammonia gives her "marvellous sensations." Although she has been nearly asphyxiated five or six times she continues to inhale it.

A famous model of the Latin Quarter who used to take injections of morphia, now uses petrol instead. *Poudre d'encens* is now the rage in some circles. A certain woman who used to give "Roman orgy" parties at her private house in Passy now gives incense parties. In an immense room draped in black and red there are placed four braziers one in each corner of the room. Here the incense smoulders while the guests lie about in pyjamas on cushions and inhale the incense until they sleep.

Men and women of the Underworld cannot afford these exotic excitements and so they subsist chiefly on the deadly cocaine. I have seen it sold in a bar not a hundred yards from the Paris Opera House. The drug was passed under my nose and if I had not

been told by a member of the Prefecture of Police who was my companion I should not have realised that anything out of the common was happening

On the counter of nearly every bar on the Continent there is a glass tumbler containing straws for the customers to sip their iced drinks through. These straws are covered with tissue paper, both ends of which are twisted, making a veritable paper bag. The cocaine merchant would quietly abstract some of these straws until he had a small stock, then he filled the pipers with cocaine, went back to the bar and quietly passed them to his customers—mostly women—who paid him afterwards.

The chausseurs, little page-boys attached to the night cafés, restaurants and bars of Montmartre are scouts for would be takers of cocaine. A few words and francs to one of these boys, and he produces the pernicious powder. As like as not he has a stock in his pockets. But if he has not he has only to dash off a few yards right or left from his post and in the twinkling of an eye a little packet changes hands.

A special brigade of police whose duty it is to watch the drug traffic remarked an elderly woman who had the appearance of a servant who had grown grey in the faithful service of some good bourgeois family. Every day this woman was seen to go to a café in the Boulevard Barbés, where she spoke to somebody—sometimes a man, sometimes a woman. After a few moments conversation the woman had a little packet handed to her after which she left. She was followed and was seen to go to a neighbouring boys' school where she waited outside until the scholars came out. She talked to some of the elder boys, several of whom went away with her. After being thus shadowed for some time she was arrested. At the police station she declared herself to be sixty-seven years of age, a music hall artist. In her possession was a packet of cocaine. When asked to what use she intended to put the coco, Mme. D remained silent. Detectives went to her address in the Impasse Guelma, Montmartre. There they were astonished to find a large quantity of cocaine and numerous opium pipes. Subsequent inquiries unearthed the fact that

Mme D, who had been a music hall artist until she became a drug fiend and was dragged into the Underworld, had organised in her flat an opium den for school-boys who also bought cocaine from her.

Nine-tenths of the women who take 'coco' in Montmartre are "ladies of uneasy virtue." Bad as it is that these women should be drug fiends it is infinitely worse that they should be the channels which lead men to first take to cocaine—more often than not out of curiosity.

There are well organised gangs in the Underworld of Paris whose whole energies are engaged in the supply of cocaine. Recently the Paris police layed by the heels a perfectly equipped gang of Chinese. These men were members of the Chinese Labour Corps, which had been employed on the British front. A Chinaman came from Canton and placed his agents at each port on the voyage to France. When in Toulon he entered into relations with the local agents of a notorious Tong society (secret society). These in turn got in touch with their members in the Chinese Labour Corps. Men were made to desert and work their way to Paris, where they met their chief. This man had about fifteen different addresses in Montmartre, and never slept two successive nights in the same room. He received supplies of all kinds of drugs which he disposed of through his satellites. After much tracking fraught with considerable personal danger, the police ran the chief to earth. The hotel where he was known to be was surrounded by a cordon of police. When they burst into his room it was stocked with weapons like a veritable arsenal.

But although the police make dozens of arrests every week and break up the organised gangs, they are powerless to put down the traffic in cocaine.

Men who prey on women "mackerels" they are called in argot, although the more polite term is *souteneur* find the cocaine traffic a very profitable one.

These human parasites began to deal in drugs on a large scale during the war. Armen had to keep their nerves keyed up to concert pitch and many of them resorted to drugs in order to do so. I don't suppose

there was any nation whose airmen during the war did not take either cocaine or morphia. I am not slighting airmen when I say this. My statement is based on actual observation in France and on statements made to me privately and also on statements made publicly by authorised persons.

Udet the only well known German airman who came through the war alive told me in Berlin that the best known of the German "aces" were drug fiends.

At an inquest held in London in January, 1921, on the body of a man who had served in the Flying Corps during the war and who had died of morphia poisoning a doctor said that the taking of drugs was very prevalent among flying men. In France some of the very famous "aces" were addicted to drugs and quite a number of American and Canadian airmen took snow as they call cocaine. A 'sleigh rider' is an American slang term for a cocaine taker.

There enlisted in the French Flying Corps two twin brothers whom we will call the N's and who speedily made a name for themselves. Their's was the first name to become known to the public. The two brothers were devoted to each other and always spent their leave in Paris together. As youths they had gained distinction on the football field. They were used to a healthy out-of-door life and there was no question of either one or the other taking drugs.

Then one day one of the twins fell a victim to a German "Archie". His brother's grief was terrible to see. His special leave was almost finished. He had to return to the front to fly, and he found that he could not do it. His nerves were in a terrible state when he confided his troubles to a woman acquaintance in Paris. She told him that some Americans she knew who were in France with the French Army were inhaling cocaine, "coco" she called it. N said he would try it. Two days before he was due back he inhaled part of a packet of "coco".

He was a changed man. His grief was gone. His companions in his squadron did not know him. He was always talking about avenging his brother's death, and he took part in some hair raising "stunts". The

bars of his Croix de Guerre grew imposing. But he was always wanting leave and going to Paris. He became known in all the wartime gay haunts. His exploits at the front continued. He grew thinner and thinner, but his eyes shone bright.

His escapades in Paris became notorious, but the authorities shut their eyes. At last there came a time when they could no longer shut their eyes. N and a well-known boxer, with some other choice friends, went out one night in a motor car in Paris. They ran amok in the Avenue de l'Opera and chased civilians round and round lamp-post refuges. They chased a policeman who tried to stop the car into the Rue Quatre Septembre and pinned him against the wall, seriously injuring him. The authorities tried to arrest N, but he had got out to an aerodrome near Paris, obtained an aeroplane and flown to the front, where he was arrested, court martialled and sent to prison for a short term.

He came out better in health and apparently normal but again his friends of the Paris Underworld got him in their clutches, and once more he became a slave to cocaine. The war ended, but N was still on the lookout for adventure, and when the drug possessed him he was game for anything.

I now intend to make known a matter which would have caused a world-wide sensation if it had materialised. A group of French sportsmen approached N and asked him if he would fly to Holland and bombard the Kaiser in his home at Amorengen. N was willing and the matter was being arranged when the French Secret Service got wind of it and threatened all concerned with very severe penalties if the intended adventure was carried out. It was not. But N was taking more and more cocaine.

He was practising on a special machine on which he intended to be the first man to fly through the Arc de Triomphe, when he met with a banal accident and died. Cocaine had claimed another life.

The parasites of the Paris Underworld who supplied armmen with cocaine and who are now supplying anybody who wants it are not always French. They are the

dregs of all nations In the haunts of the denizens of the Underworld these men are known by many names, but each has a distinctive nickname You will find "Zizi le Costand" (athlete), "Bibi le Lutteur" (wrestler), and a host of others Since the vogue of Charlie Chaplin there are many "Charlot" as the famous Mr Chaplin is known in France, but this is not for any real or fancied likeness to the great film comedian, it is merely because "Charlot" is a popular and 'catchy' name

The police know ninety per cent of the *souteneurs*, but it is extremely difficult to catch them red-handed, that is to say, as far as the drug traffic is concerned with the cocaine in their possession in sufficient quantities to warrant a charge of 'dealing' The *petites amies* of the *souteneurs* in other words, their real means of support act as watchdogs in keeping a sharp lookout for danger from the police, and if a copin (slang for 'pal') ever gives them away, then it is more likely than not that sudden murder will be committed which for sheer audacity outdoes anything ever attempted by Sinn Fein

I have already stated how cocaine is passed from hand to hand in the better class bars of Paris, but of course there are plenty where there is no need of camouflage of any kind In many of the bars of Montmartre and in some in the Latin Quarter, men and women are to be found all the afternoon and evening people who will hand over the drug on payment of a few francs It is the easiest of transactions—as easy as buying an ounce of chocolates in a sweetshop, and the police know all about it Why, then if they know all about it, do they not put an end to the traffic, is the question that may be asked The answer is that there are more bars than the police can cope with Often a place will be closed down, but the 'patron,' the proprietor flits somewhere else, and as soon as he is established the word is passed round and the customers once more foregather to purchase their cocaine in comfort

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English and American people can never understand the French law, which is apparently so lax, and which

gives so many opportunities to the evil doer. Perhaps it would be wise here and now to explain exactly why so many men and women in France receive sentences of imprisonment and then are able to carry on as before. This is because of the "Loi Bérenger".

The estimable M Bérenger was a wise and able man who succeeded in passing a law which was named after him. This law established what is known as the *sursis*. A man or woman can be found guilty, sentenced to a term of years, and then walk out of the court as free as the air they breathe. The sentence is merely noted in the annals of the court and if the guilty party ever comes before the court again he or she will serve the term of imprisonment to which they were previously sentenced, but from which the *sursis* freed them. The nearest thing in English law to the "Loi Bérenger" is the First Offenders Act but it is very much more in favour of the guilty person than is the English equivalent. Many hundreds of men and women who have dealt in drugs have managed to get off scot free through the "Loi Bérenger". And I well remember one case when a young man and woman were caught red handed in the corridors of the French Law Courts hawking cocaine. But a silver voiced advocate obtained the benefit of the *sursis* for them, and even if they did not leave the precincts of the court "without a stain on their character," they did not serve their sentence.

In a side street off the Avenue de l'Opera there was a small bar kept by a woman who was aged between forty and fifty. She was known as Guite to her regular customers. Unlike the grasshopper which sings all the summer and starves in the winter, Guite had saved money and established herself in this bar. She had a lover who was always pestering her for money, which she gave him in large quantities. Then one day the lover, who had lost much money through gambling, asked for an exorbitant sum. The woman refused to give it him. There was a dispute. The woman went out of the room for a moment and returned with a revolver in each fist. She fired twice, and the man fell dead. Then Guite

went downstairs called a cab and drove to the police station and gave herself up

Six months afterwards she was tried Her lawyer was the same man who was defending Landru He made a brilliant speech Guite was sentenced to two years imprisonment—with *sursis*—and the same night a brilliant little party gathered in the bar in the street off the Avenue de l'Opera and partook of many drinks to celebrate the freedom of the fair barmaid

I am afraid my readers will think this rather comic opera justice and typical of one of the things they do not do better in France But to come back to our muttons for I have not yet told how and where the pretty ladies of Paris most do inhale coco which as I have already said is the slang term for cocaine G H Q Love is the exchange where the coco takers gather and perhaps I cannot do better than to portray a typical one

* * * * *

In any and every Paris night restaurant and café you will find somewhere along the corridor two swing doors usually mirror covered Above the doorway will be a small white enamel panel lettered in black *Vestiaire* Here throughout the night pretty ladies come and go If you observe you will notice that they emerge with eyebrows rather blacker lips more cherry red and cheeks bearing evidence of very recent recourse to the rouge pot But unless you are a very close observer you will not notice that their eyes glisten ever so much brighter and you will be at a loss to account for their increased vivacity when once again they sit close beside you and whisper soft nothings in your ear I am speaking of course to bachelor readers I know very well that married men unless they are earnest seekers after truth, are not interested in these things

The bright eye and the vivacious tongue my dear sir are nothing more or less than the direct result of a little coco inhaled when your fair companion left you for a few minutes to powder her nose She may have had the coco in her vanity bag all the time she was talking to you or she may have obtained a pinch or two from *copine* which is argot for lady friend

Or again if the lady is in funds she may herself have purchased a little packet, either from the woman who takes care of G.H.Q. Love or from the little uniformed *chassuy*, who in his turn may have a supply in his pocket or, if he has run short, may have made a hurried 'course' (errand) some doors away. It all depends.

Once you know the uses of G.H.Q. Love you will find your interests in your neighbours doubled. Look at that dark girl sitting over in the corner there all by herself. Her glass is empty, her eyes scan every newcomer. She seems in the last stage of despair. Perhaps you are sorry for her, and perhaps you wonder how such a smart looking creature can be all alone in such a place. Maybe you have remarked her on other occasions at Pigalle's or the Monaco, and you idly wonder how she can afford to possess so many dresses—seeing that she sits there all alone. Well, I can satisfy your curiosity as regards her clothes. When you were strolling round Montmartre in the daytime you must have remarked the number of second-hand clothes shops whose windows are exclusively given up to the display of women's garments. These shops kept by members of the Chosen Race depend almost entirely on the 'daughters of joy' of the quarter. They will, if asked, sell them any garment, but they do a much bigger trade in hiring out the dresses, hats and furs. A girl can hire anything for a night, a week or longer—at a price, and the price depends on what the shopkeeper estimates the value of the girl. It is a brutal trade, but *que voulez vous?*

That, then, is the secret of our dark friend's smartness. You will notice that she leaves her seat every once in a while and goes into G.H.Q. Love, and returns with a little more carmine on her lips, but despair sits just as heavily on her brow. However there comes a time when she returns all smiles. She is not the same person at all. The girl will now shout to acquaintances across the room, and if she sees you are interested in her knowing of course that you are a bachelor, she will as like as not invite you to her table or at least send her Lill to you by the waiter as a mark of friendship. The secret? Why you have guessed it. Cocaine! If you could

have followed her into G H Q Love on each of her pilgrimages you would have overheard short but interesting little conversations The Commander-in-Chief inside the double swing doors is a fat old woman who wears a white apron I am quite convinced that somewhere in France there must be a place where they produce these women for the supply never fails and the demand is great Some of the women indeed a good many of them were daughters of joy in their youth

Had you been present you would have heard a conversation something on these lines

Fat Old Woman No luck *ma belle*?

Dark Girl shakes her head wearily then takes up a rouge stick which she rubs over her lips pencils her eyebrows and idly passes a pad over her finger nails

Marcelle known in Montmartre as *la grande* Marcelle a tall fair girl shouts shrilly How silly you are Yvonne what matter if your Ernest has left you? One lost ten found say I

Yvonne a short and dowdily dressed young person whose eyes show signs of recent weeping All very well for you to talk Marcelle you never had a man to stick to you

Marcelle still more shrilly A man ha ha that's good a mackerel you mean a dirty cur who sent you out on the streets to get money for him to gamble with No mackerel for me I know what to do with my money

Yvonne spitefully Yes we all know what you do with your money—send it to keep your bastard brat in the country

Fat Old Woman Shut up *mes belles*

During this conversation the Dark Girl goes back into the restaurant where you saw her looking more miserable than ever

Dark Girl returns to G.H.Q. Love

Fat Old Woman No luck *ma belle*?

Dark Girl Hasn't Margot been in yet?

Fat Old Woman It's nearly her time.

Dark Girl once more passes rouge stick over her lips rubs her nails with pad and puts a little more black on her eyebrows

Enters hurriedly Margot, a slim and pretty blonde. She is laughing and evidently on good terms with herself

Margot - "Good evening, everybody"

Fat Old Woman - "Any luck, *ma belle*?"

Margot - "Yes, I have got it."

Fat Old Woman - "It! It! What it? Oh, *le coco Bigre*!"

Dark Girl, excitedly - "Give me a pinch, Margot."

Margot, laughing - "My what a face! You will catch a millionaire with that face, I don't think."

Dark Girl, sulkily - "Give me a pinch, only two pinches. I am without a son, otherwise I should never have been without any."

Marcelle, who now has her hat off and is crumpling her hair - "Without a son? *Pauvre sotte*, and that Englishman sitting opposite you and making sheep's eyes. What about him? He is there to enjoy himself, is he not *hein*?"

Dark Girl - "Oh, I mock myself not badly of him Margot, give me a pinch."

Margot takes a little paper packet out of her bag and hands it to the Dark Girl. Here you are then, but don't take the lot. I shall want it when I go home to-night."

Dark Girl, looking as if she has found Paradise, takes a pinch of the white powder between her right thumb and forefinger and puts it to her nostril, and sniffs hard, then she takes another pinch to the other nostril, and then yet another and another.

Margot - "Here, hold hard, that's enough."

Dark Girl, whose eyes now shine brightly - *Merci, en revoir everybody*."

Marcelle, shouting - "*Eh bien*, the tall Englishman! Do you still mock at him?"

Dark Girl, laughing loudly - "He is mine."

And you, my tall Englishman, will either pay her bill or not. It all depends.

You may perhaps think this little word picture of G.H.Q. Love Montmartre, is overdrawn and exaggerated, but I can assure you that it is not. Many a little human drama is staged in these places, and tragedy and comedy

both of which have their appointed places in the Under world of Paris, are to be found behind the mirror-covered swing doors. Perhaps there is more tragedy than comedy, many laugh so they shall not cry, but the tigerish instincts of the "daughters of joy" come to the surface in gusts of primitive passion when the prey of these manhunters is out of sight, although not out of mind.

Champagne corks pop in the restaurant, the band crashes out the latest rag, women in gorgeous gowns seem not to have a care in the world but behind the scenes there is another story to be heard. The eternal struggle for the wherewithal to live, the everlasting war of the sexes, this and much more can be seen and heard every night in Montmartre.

CHAPTER VI

HOW BUCK HIT THE PIPE

HE came into Paris with his shoulders hunched up his unstylish shoes burst at the toes, where his white socks showed through. We called him Buck from the first. But now I come to think of it I feel sure you have never heard of "hitting the pipe." Well

You say that romance is dead or again you may assert that Haroun-al Raschid still goes stalking through the highways. It all depends on your optimism—or your digestion. You can sit in a chair on the boulevard and wish and wait for Adventure to come your way, or you may be marching to an important appointment and find Adventure barring your path, all dressed up in the most alluring trappings. But I am still keeping you waiting for an explanation of "hitting the pipe."

In the language of the United States an opium smoker is a man who "hits the pipe." Very simple, this explanation is it not? Almost as simple as the little pipe of wood, silver or beaten metal, in which you insert the glowing red pill of opium. But to tell you how Buck came to hit it is, as Kipling once wrote, another story.

Where Buck appeared from was at first a mystery. He lived on the fourth floor of a third rate hotel. I say lived but it is more likely he merely existed, for it was not every day that he ate. We knew vaguely that he had come across the Atlantic, but Buck was never precise about the manner of his crossing, and it is to be surmised that he made the journey in a cattle boat. You must visualise him as I first saw him one wet day in January. I have described the shoes and the white socks, but Buck himself is more difficult to portray. He was about thirty two, of medium height, and neither dark nor fair very square in the shoulders, very muscular in the arms clean shaven, and with a curious habit of speaking out of one corner of his mouth. Yes, some of them do

Very well, then, you have some sort of picture in your mind of Buck. Apart from his shoes he was not altogether shabby, but his one suit, built some summer when Buck was considerably younger I should say, was not altogether the most appropriate wear for him when he came into my ken on this wet day in January. His shoulders were hunched up, but not in the manner you see the unemployed walking. Buck, too, was not employed just then, but the way he wore his shoulders had nothing to do with it.

Buck, who at the time was a newsboy or a bartender, I forget which, had heard there was a war on over in Europe and he thought he would take a look at it. Please don't be frightened, I am not going to spin you a war story of the good bad man who "makes good" in the last chapter, or the last "reel"—depending how and where you take your dramatic fare. I am quite convinced that Buck was an excellent neutral. Had the said cattle-boat been going to Germany he would have gone there with equal pleasure and open mindedness to take a look at the little old war. But there was a Fleet—so there were no cattle-boats going to Germany. That was why Buck was dumped down on the hospitable shores of France. Hospitable, that is, if you have money to spend, otherwise you can starve equally well in France as anywhere else. I know that. I learnt my lesson also. But to return to our muttons.

Not that there was anything sheepish about Buck. He was as wide awake a young man as any who wear hair. He had no money, no friends, not a word of French in his vocabulary, but the world was his oyster, and every month seemed to have an R in it. I trust I am describing Buck without getting too enthusiastic about him. I never was enthusiastic, and am not now. You see him perhaps full of beans—as they say, ready to take life as he found it—and anything else that was not nailed to the counter. When Buck was in good form he would drop hints of life as he had lived it "over there." Sometimes he would tell tales out of school and take us figuratively speaking, on wild adventures in strange places—"when I was on the West Coast"—and then w

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follow a wholly scandalous story of what had happened one night when a man had said the five words which no American must speak without a smile on his face.

Buck could take his own part in a fight, too for I have seen him do it. And if four of us had not dragged him off his man, Mr Buck would have had to face a French magistrate. Not at all the sort of man you would want to take home to tea with your mother.

Buck had not the faintest notions of life in Paris but he was quite ready to learn. He wanted a good time, he wanted to earn plenty of money, he wanted Adventure with a capital A. He did not rush off and enlist in the Foreign Legion. He made no attempt to fight on any front except the Paris front. I am not blaming him. I am just recording. He was one of those people who were quite content to sit on a chair on the Boulevard and wait. I have said that Buck had no notion of life in Paris. I should have said that he had plenty of notions, but the notions were the wrong ones. He had read the more sensational of the New York newspapers and was quite prepared to do battle with Apaches when and where he might meet them thinking the most likely place to meet them was on the thresholds of the more piquant night cafés. But it did not take Buck very long to learn that Paris at war was a mighty different place to the Paris he had imagined though I do not say that a peaceful Paris might not have also been very different. Anyhow, there it was.

Buck had no use for the people he called "crêpe-hangers." He wanted life with plenty of colour in it. He drifted into a crowd of American newspaper men, and they showed him a little of Paris but they were too weighed down with the responsibilities of their jobs to be of much use to Buck. However, they formed a channel leading to other acquaintances. Buck had plenty of cheek and bluff and very soon he was making friends right and left. One began to hear of him everywhere.

Do you know old Buck? I was out with him on a party last night." Then would follow a story of some gay doings in wartime Paris. One saw him more and more

in the bars where Americans and Englishmen gathered. His personality was not the most pleasing. He was not generous indeed he had not the wherewithal to be generous but he was a good fellow and one lived in a hectic round of excitement anyhow.

Then one noticed a curious thing. One had been seeing Buck with a certain circle of friends and then one would see the circle without seeing Buck there.

Buck? Oh yes he's somewhere around. Then one saw him with an entirely different set of friends and if one were a careful observer one would note that the new circle was of a different class of men to the former. It was a more monied class. And then

There appeared the woman. Of course you have been waiting for her and mayhap have wondered why I have not produced her before but in truth she did not appear before so you must take her in her proper place. For let me whisper it to you she is not the only woman in this story.

The woman was almost as great a mystery as her lover Buck. She was tall dark and untidy and not a bit good looking. Where she came from nobody knew. She was French, she said and probably was but she spoke English well. She was heard to mention a husband whom nobody saw and she spoke of going to America although she never went. But she went everywhere where Buck went. She had more than a nodding acquaintance with the Underworld of Paris. Where and how she had gained the knowledge and experience she never said and nobody asked her. But she knew alright alright as Buck would say in his language.

Buck and the woman made their bow in the places the dark subterranean places where Paris used to amuse itself during the war. I have given a description of these places elsewhere in this book. No need to say more about them now. But at first the couple appeared in the more modest of these haunts. It was difficult to get a drink after nine-thirty at night. But if you knew Buck who then had been but nine months in Paris he would take you somewhere. A cab would be called you would drive through the night not knowing

or caring where you went. The cab would stop before a most ordinary looking house. Buck would descend the cab, for which you paid, then he would ring a bell, and when the door opened he would walk upstairs with all the assurance in the world. He would stop on the right landing, then he would give the right knock, which was the open sesame and the door would swing back, disclosing a rather repulsive looking woman. You would go into an ordinary little room and you would order and obtain and pay for what you liked. And the woman would talk most amusingly. And Buck would talk out of one corner of his mouth. You see, one had to amuse oneself as one could in those days.

For quite a while Buck and the woman were together day and night. She blossomed forth in brighter tints. Then one day, or one night, I forget which, Buck appeared alone. One asked after the woman. Buck gave an airy reply. No they had not quarrelled. She was somewhere about. And that was all you ever heard but *nobody to my knowledge ever saw her again.*

Buck was now quite a feature of Parisian life. No longer was he to be met with in the lower haunts of the Underworld. Like Solomon in all his glory he made his bow where they drank nothing but champagne. He knew all the French aces of the air, and called them by their nicknames. He exchanged confidences with officers of high rank. He knew quite a lot too much perhaps of important military happenings. Buck was much sought after by men and women. He always had a joke and a smile for everybody. One became accustomed to meeting him everywhere in all the smartest haunts of the Underworld, which were much frequented at that time by allied officers on leave. He could dance could Buck and dance well, like most Americans and this, of course, added to his popularity. But I must confess that I experienced a sort of shock one evening when, having dined with some rather unbohemian American friends, Buck walked in after dinner to make a fourth at bridge.

One heard of places being raided, and Buck being

caught in the raids, but he never got into any kind of trouble and always came up smiling

And then the second woman appeared. There was nothing mysterious about her. She was very pretty, slight and *petite*. She had nothing much to say, and did not try and say it which was wise on her part you will agree. But she had repose and she sat quietly and looked pretty and drank pretty looking Liquids through a straw. Fascinating that was the word to describe her. And Buck was not a jealous man. He liked his friends his friends coming down from the line on leave, to have a good time. They were quite willing to pay, and Buck and his young friend took them round and introduced them. But you still found that Buck was climbing higher in the social scale although the scale was but one which led through the Underworld. But, as I have remarked everybody was living a hectic life, and although there were censors of letters censors of cables and censors of news there were no censors of morals which perhaps was as well for everybody.

Buck did not pose as a patriot but I emphatically deny the allegation that he was a pro-German. He did not say 'my country—right or wrong but always my country. There was nothing of the bigot about Buck. He took the Germans quite seriously to task about many misendeavours but he did the same thing with England and America. His information about coming events was remarkable. It was uncanny, until you remembered the people with whom he mixed and then you recalled that he had every means of knowing what was happening on the Western Front. But Buck confined his doings to the Paris front still.

I used to meet Buck about this time quite a lot and sometimes I would find him downhearted. He had come to little old France to see the little old war but apart from a few bombs, he had seen nothing at all, and Adventure with the capital A had not come his way. You could not exactly describe him as sitting on a chair on the Boulevard now and waiting for it, unless you spoke figuratively. But he had his good times,

did Buck, and he drank deep of Life, and that was the only kind of drinking he did to excess

I have seen Buck hobnobbing, as they say, with the most unexpected people, men holding high positions in French diplomatic life, young men and old men who were glad to wander a while through the Underworld but none too young or too old but to be glad to bask in the sweet smiles of Buck's pretty companion. This continued for a long time America was in the war now, but somehow Buck was never forced to fight for his country

Then history repeated itself Buck was seen about town in the gayest haunts without the pretty but quiet woman Oh, yes, she was about No they had not quarrelled were still good friends, but not together any longer It was not even a nine days' wonder It was nobody's business Nobody knew and nobody cared what had become of the young woman Very likely Buck himself did not know Certainly he did not seem to care very much He carried on as usual

He was never very full of money, but he always had friends in plenty, friends who were only too willing to pay for a good time, and to pay for the man who was showing it them

But Buck did not remain unattached very long He appeared but only in the very smartest restaurants and in the most select of night haunts, with a most beautiful woman She was very tall, very strikingly dark, most gorgeously gowned, and the most fascinating woman who had ever appeared in Buck's circle She spoke all languages with equal fluency She was said to be Dutch, and she never said anything to discourage this belief She lived in a flat just off the Champs Elysées and the flat was a fitting setting for its occupant Chinese hanging lamps lit the spacious rooms There were wonderful divans costly Persian carpets and rugs from the East She had travelled much in the East, she said and had brought back with her many Eastern customs Beautiful ladies who have travelled in the East can be eccentric without attracting much attention, and the fact that Buck's friend had danced Eastern dances at private

soirees was only looked upon as a pleasant eccentricity. To be invited to her flat became the most sought after invitation in Paris. Not all visitors were admitted to the very select parties she gave, and those who went never spoke much about it, but they tried hard to go again. It was evident to everybody that Buck was much smitten. It was a serious *affaire* this time. He followed his divinity about everywhere. He was her slave, always at her beck and call, and it became obvious

to his friends that Buck was not looking so well as he did. And most strange to relate a faint brown stain appeared at the right hand corner of his mouth. Most people wondered what on earth it could be, others, who knew, smiled quietly. But the stain became deeper, and Buck's looks became more and more haggard. You see, Buck had "hit the pipe." I do not believe that he enjoyed it any more than I will believe that he was a slave to opium, but he was a slave to the woman who had bade him smoke.

There came a day when neither the woman nor Buck were to be seen. There were strange rumours in Paris. Then after a long long time, it was said that Buck had been seen. But the man who said he had seen him was called a fool, for he described Buck as a man with hunched-up shoulders, wild mad eyes that looked but did not see, out of elbow and down at heel. And yet and yet there was an echo in some of our minds, perhaps? was it, after all?

He was seen again and again, never in his old haunts, but passing like a homeless ghost, flitting from place to place, ignoring his friends who tried to probe the mystery.

* * * * *

{ You want to know what became of the woman who was the cause of Buck "hitting the pipe?" There was a court martial behind closed doors. The war is over, and what was a secret then may be disclosed now. The woman was accused and found guilty of sending to Germany some details of the tanks which were about to be used in the first Battle of the Somme. All through

the trial she refused to speak. One of the ablest lawyers at the French bar was her advocate and although he pleaded hard for his client's life the court was adamant. Very highly placed persons tried to intercede and have the woman's sentence changed to one of imprisonment for life, but she had to meet her doom.

Very early one winter's morning a motor car left the women's prison of St. Lazare in Paris. In it were three guards and a tall woman enveloped in a cloak, but without a hat. The guards were troubled and ill at ease. In another motor car which followed the first there were seated two sweet-faced nuns. The motor-cars arrived at Vincennes, just outside Paris.

On the edge of the ditch which surrounds the military exercise grounds there was placed a wooden stake. Drawn up not many paces away and facing the stake, was a file of soldiers in horizon blue. They were standing stiffly at attention. A few paces to their right was a young officer who had been wounded at the front. The motor cars stopped. The hatless woman and the guards alighted. They waited a moment for the two nuns who placed themselves one on either side of the woman prisoner, and so walked with her to the post of death.

The woman still standing was bound to the stake but as they were going to blindfold her she laughingly shook her head, and, looking her executioners straight in the face she met her death. The name of the woman was Mata Hari.

* * * * *

And Buck? Oh he is still about. Sometimes at night, when you walk through the streets where are the bars most frequented by Americans, a creature will slip out of the gutter and furtively pick at your sleeve. He has aged and his teeth are all gone. There is a thick brown stain at the right hand corner of his mouth and thank God, he is quite mad.

CHAPTER VII

IN THE POLITICAL UNDERWORLD

NEITHER the fertile brains of Sax Rohmer nor William le Queux could invent plots which could equal certain schemes plotted in the political Underworld of Paris. During the past decade ministers and political morals have changed considerably. Now the *cabinet noir* is seldom used but even nowadays there are things done which would make excellent plots for plays, books and films.

The *cabinet noir* in the days that are gone was a powerful weapon in the hands of any French government. In those times women often took a hand in politics and many cabinets have been made and overthrown in the boudoir of a pretty Parisienne. The *cabinet noir* was the place where a person's correspondence was subjected to a thorough inspection before delivery. The word would go forth that all letters and telegrams directed to M. X. would have to pass through the hands of the *cabinet noir*. Persons employed would in their turn be rather under the thumb of the persons employing them so there was not much chance of them giving away any information. Letters would be unsealed, read, copied and then delivered. Sometimes nothing compromising would be found and then different tactics would have to be adopted. But if the letters, telegrams and *petit bleus* contained a few words from a woman referring to an appointment, a dinner engagement or what not with the Deputy X, then the under secretary, who was nominally looking after the matter would know how to act.

He would send for the deputy and ask him point blank if it was true that he was opposed to a bill that the government was thinking of putting through the Chamber. If the questioner was satisfied that rumour was right he

would stroke his moustache and smiling sardonically, murmur "Charming little creature, Mademoiselle Z., is she not?" The deputy taken unawares would probably murmur and stammer, and admit and deny all in the same breath. Then would the young under-secretary administer the *coup de grâce*, telling the deputy that he hoped to find him on the side of the government when the bill came before the Chamber, he would ring for him to be shown out. The *cabinet noir* had done its work again.

There is no doubt that this system saved many governments from awkward moments, but it had rather a boomerang effect, for men who were broken by it were sure to seek a way of revenge, and the person or persons who had broken them would have their past and present put under the microscope and woe betide them if there were any blemishes. There were and to a certain extent still are, men and particularly women of the Underworld who would lend themselves body and soul—at a price—to the highest bidder, and if a man's honour was to be ruined and his political future blasted, there would be no qualms at the undertaking.

The "listening table" was another favourite way of knowing everything possible about a man shadowed. Instructions were given that wherever his telephone number was asked for by a subscriber, he and the person talking to him were to be switched through to the "table" where an operator sat and took down every word in shorthand without, of course either of the people speaking knowing anything of the matter. The "listening table" I might mention is not yet entirely out of action any more than the *cabinet noir* is, the former method of inquiry was used many times during the war. Certain persons many of them British might be surprised to know that the Prefecture of Police has full records of conversations which were thought to be private. The political Underworld of Paris is very complex. It employs some extraordinary people and I think this is the first time that two of its methods have been exposed. Certainly several foreigners who have dabbled too much in French politics, and have been expelled, owe their fate purely

and simply to either the *cabaret noir* or the "listening table," or both

Certain ministers who have made their way to power by devious routes, have a gang of blackmailers from the Underworld dogging their footsteps and endeavouring, like a pack of wolves to drag down their prey and make a meal of him. There is an elderly deputy who not very long ago told me a little story which he put in parable form. I will endeavour to repeat it because it gives in succinct manner what a certain phase of the French political Underworld is like. The M M mentioned throughout the story was for a long time the Minister of the Interior. Two years ago he was sentenced to a term of banishment and is now believed to be in Spain.

"When M was in the gutter where he really belongs" began the deputy, "he used to play a game of manille every afternoon in a certain little café. His opponent had a wife who did not approve of the afternoons spent in playing games of cards. One afternoon the woman came into the café and said aloud to her husband 'Come with me. M M said to his friend's wife (who was also his mistress), 'Let him be' and then the woman turned to her lover and boxed his ears shouting 'Don't you interfere, you pig.' That was some years ago, but now M is a Minister and his friend and opponent at manille is his *Chef de Cabinet*. But the woman is neither the wife of the one nor the mistress of the other." This unedifying little story of the sardonic old deputy is quite true.

But there are quite a number of other things that may be told of M and his satellites. This man is still quite young. He is a member of the French Radical-Socialist party, which in the last Chamber was the most powerful party, and consequently he was a member of several wartime governments. He was arrested by order of Clemenceau and tried by the High Court. Whether or not he was guilty of treason is not a matter for me to discuss here, but there are certain things which were proved up to the hilt, and although he was never tried for murder, the "*Action Française*" and several other newspapers accused M of being concerned in causing

the death of one Almereyda, one of the mysterious political personages of the Underworld

M was a friend and colleague of Caillaux. Both these men have been followed and tracked down by men and women with whom they had dealings at various times. Caillaux himself has avowed that he has had to deal with very curious customers, some of the men were connected with the French gutter press, and the women were often their mistresses. But sometimes they had a definite mission, and it was by means of the *cabaret* and the "listening table" that their aims became known to the French police. Caillaux has said that when his wife was being tried for the murder of Gaston Calmette the editor of the *Figaro* (a crime which the woman committed but of which was acquitted by a sympathetic jury), he was approached by some men who wanted to found a newspaper to defend his interests. This statement was, doubtless partly true. Almereyda was one of the people who wanted to run the paper, which was entitled the "*Bonnet Rouge*." Afterwards it will be recalled, the paper was suspended the head of it being shot for treason and the other members of the staff sentenced to various terms of imprisonment, which they are still serving. Caillaux no doubt had been much blackmailed by this gang. Exactly what they knew about him or what they had done in the past is open to doubt but their hold on him (and particularly Almereyda's hold), must have been very strong for when Caillaux was out of office and only in the 'wings,' his friend and colleague M was receiving Almereyda in his private room at the Ministry of the Interior and providing him with immense sums of money. These facts have been firmly established. What is more Almereyda, who sometimes called himself Vigo was able to go to Spain and Switzerland during the war, and pass back wards and forwards across the frontiers at his own sweet will. It must be remembered that all passports of French men were controlled by the Ministry of the Interior, of which M was the head.

The *Bonnet Rouge* which was a terrible rag was printing the worst kind of 'defeatist' matter. There

was a great outcry against it but Almereyda and his friends of the Underworld were immune from interference. They were obtaining great sums from the Government's secret funds. This money, which was practically black mail obtained from M only paid out of the Government's funds instead of his own was spent by the *Bornet Rouge* gang in orgies. Nearly all of them and particularly the chief Almereyda Vigo were dope fiends. This man who was eaten up by disease used to take morphia. He had a wife and child and many women friends in various parts of France. He had spent his youth in the Underworld and although he had risen he had never been able to cast off the shackles. But his death was a terrible tragedy and a mystery which has never yet been sufficiently probed. Officially the cause of his death was suicide but readers who follow the story I have to tell may come to a different opinion.

Public opinion was being voiced in the press in no uncertain fashion. Something had to be done to silence the gutter rag the *Bornet Rouge* but for obvious reasons no instructions could go out from the Ministry of the Interior. M went on a short holiday and while he was away the affairs were left in the hands of another Minister. Twenty four hours after M left Paris Almereyda was arrested.

M returned to office. Of course it is no common thing in France for a man to be kept a year or two in prison before he is brought to trial. But this man Almereyda was an exception. He was a prince in the Underworld (especially the political Underworld) with men and women ready at his beck and call. He had been useful sometimes when at liberty but it was quite possible that he would resent his liberty being curtailed even though word might be sent to him privately that detention would be made as easy as possible and acquittal would throw open the prison doors. There was always a danger of Almereyda ratting and burning his boats telling all he knew. The all might very likely prove unpleasant to people in high places. There was a very delicate problem to solve namely how to keep Almereyda quiet in prison and at the same time allay the public

and press Almereyda was ill—so his lawyers said. A doctor was called in, and the prisoner was transferred to the prison infirmary at Fresnes. Two days later he was found dead in his cell.

He was partly dressed, but was lying on the floor, a bootlace tied tightly round his neck. Of course there was an inquiry of some kind. Then it was proved that a morphia syringe and a quantity of morphia had been smuggled into the prison in pots of jam received by the prisoner. An examination of the body showed that there had been very recent injections of morphia. The bootlace was part of one of the prisoner's, snapped from a pair of shoes which were in the cell. Two warders who had nominal charge of him, alleged that they knew nothing of the affair. But Almereyda was looked after by a convict named Bernard. This man's record was published in some of the French newspapers—and a very evil one it was. It was proved at the enquiry that he had access to the prisoner at all hours. The warders had seen Almereyda late at night when he complained of being in considerable pain. Bernard stated that he was called to the prisoner's cell in the early hours of the morning. Then, of course, he was still alive. The result of the inquiry was a statement to the effect that Almereyda died by strangulation and that he had committed suicide. But . . . dead men tell no tales.

It would take a book and not one chapter of a book in which to recount the many stories of the political Underworld. Men and women play their allotted parts on a stage which is crowded with supers. The political history of France during the Great War contains many dark chapters and one should remember that in no country engaged in a life and death struggle have there been so many cases of treason and trials for alleged treason as in France.

A man who started life as a bottle washer in a boulevard café, and who became a Senator, sat one day in the dock facing a court martial on a charge of treason. He was acquitted, but a man who was with him, Pierre Lenour, was shot at Vincennes.

Lenoir, the son of a wealthy father, was the typical example of a young man who became entangled in the political Underworld of Paris. He had everything in his favour but he preferred to become the friend of men and women who made him their tool for their nefarious purposes. Like many others who are members of the gangs which frequent the Underworld, Lenoir was addicted to drugs. He made friends with women who were as bad in this way as he was. His mother did her best to save him but he was driven from pillar to post by his "friends" who were simply making use of him to get money for their own ends. The source of the supply was undoubtedly Germany and Germany wanted to purchase a Paris newspaper. The "*Journal*" was reputed to be for sale and many men and women in the Underworld posed as the persons who could bring about the sale to a man who would have been in Germany's pay. Lenoir was I am convinced more sinned against than sinning, and other people should have met with their deserts and have accompanied him to the stake at Vincennes.

Some of these people are still about Paris. One of them is an Englishman by birth, and most likely his name will one day figure in a sensational case that will astonish the whole world, but until then one must keep silent. This man has many satellites in the political Underworld, and curiously enough for an Englishman, he has already succeeded in laying his hands on several very important weapons which are usually the property of Frenchmen who desire to achieve political power.

Thinking of this man's name brings to my mind another who was shot as a traitor. I refer to Bolo Pacha. This man was merely the tool in the hands of men who were cleverer than he. He was just an ordinary adventurer, who had no information of any kind to sell to the Germans, but he paid the penalty of being a political adventurer—one of those curious creatures of the Underworld who only exist in France and in some of the newer of the South American republics. Bolo had one curious trait—he never used women in his adventures. His earlier life was full of mean swindlings, when women

were often his victims, but after he married he never either swindled a woman or used one as a decoy to get money. This is more than curious, because it is typical of all the French political adventurers who have come under my notice that they make great play with women. Sometimes the women are the dupes, sometimes they are part and parcel of the plot and draw their share of the booty with the men.

One woman who was certainly nothing but a dupe was closely related to an Englishman occupying a high station. She married a Frenchman and settled in France. She was a pretty woman but not beautiful. Her attraction was her brilliant conversation. Very soon after her marriage she developed a flair for political manoeuvring. Her house in Paris became a salon—in the same sense as one talks of the old-time political salons. Ministers and under-secretaries were at her feet. She knew all the moves on the board and being a wealthy woman there was not the slightest suspicion that she was making use of any information that came her way. Many people of importance in France paid court to her and ultimately a man set himself out to use this woman in order to obtain certain information of primary importance. He was not above getting in touch with one of the very dapper young men who are members of the political Underworld, and made a certain suggestion to him in fact promising him a position if matters fell out as he desired. The young man was to compromise the woman but she was a young person who knew how to take care of herself. Very quickly she seized the tangled threads of the affair, straightened them out and sent both the men about their business. But the matter did not rest there and there ensued a crisis in political circles which might have had the gravest results. I can only say that the affair occurred shortly before Marshal Foch was appointed Generalissimo of the Allied Armies. The matter was settled but for a long time the lady was under a cloud. As I have already stated, I am convinced that she was merely a dupe in the whole affair.

Other women play to win. There occurs to me the name of a French countess who had a love affair with

a Minister. The woman although a countess was closely watched by the police and the man who was her lover was head of the department which nominally at least controls the Prefecture of Police. He was warned in a friendly way by one of his subordinates but turned angry and refused to listen to a word said against the lady. There came a time however when he was convinced that the woman was merely using him as a tool to serve her political friends and it was the hand of the Minister himself which signed the warrant expelling her from France.

Elderly senators who have young female friends occupying situations at one or other of the French subsidised theatres are often the butts of jokes in the Paris news papers but the jokes now have lost their sting. No doubt it was true at one time that senators and deputies who had fallen victims to the charms of young French actresses and opera dancers were sometimes ensnared in plots of men who used the women as decoys for their own ends but I do not think this sort of thing is very prevalent to-day although of course everyone who has lived in Paris any length of time learns of cases where certain actresses exercise a certain amount of political power.

There is an actress who still acts despite her somewhat advanced age and if this woman could ever be induced to write her story her political memories would cause a great sensation. No doubt she has been the cause of the overthrow of more than one government.

Sometimes one hears of a young revue actress trying to be a power in politics but after a time she loses her pearls or buys a lion or does something else which her press agent can arrange easier than forming a political salon. During the war a very young actress playing a very small part in a revue in one of the boulevard theatres entered a taxi-cab and found on the seat some documents which looked most important. She took them to the police station where they were found to be of the very greatest importance. The two men through whose carelessness the documents were left behind in the taxi

were court martialled. Now a general, who was military attaché to an important French Embassy, and a young French lieutenant, are on half pay, and a young actress no longer rides in taxis, but drives a car of her own. This story is another phase of the political Underworld and should really not be here at all.

CHAPTER VIII

NIGHT CLUBS

PARISIANS do not understand club life as Londoners do. True, Paris possesses clubs some of which such as the Travellers and the Jockey, are exceedingly well known, and have on their list of members men whose names are famous on both sides of the Channel. Many of the members of such clubs as I have named never use them except three or four times a year when passing through Paris on their way south.

Another famous club is the Automobile, which has a far longer list of French members than either of the other two forementioned clubs. Café life, of course, replaces club life for the middle class man. But no ordinary Paris club could possibly exist were it not for the card playing. Not whist or bridge but gambling games pure and simple. Exceedingly high stakes are played for at *chevin de fer* and baccarat and the games are played with scrupulous honesty. One never hears the breath of scandal concerning them.

It stands to reason that there are other clubs *sub rosa* where gambling goes on, and clubs which are not tolerated by the police. Such clubs if clubs they may be called, are much frequented by members of the Underworld of Paris. In *argot* they are known as *tripots*, and the people who run them are known as *Grecs*. The probable reason for calling the professional gamblers "Greeks" is that the Greeks are famous or notorious gamblers. People who have frequented the rooms at Deauville and Monte Carlo will readily agree with me. The *tripots*, or gambling hells, are to be found scattered all over Paris. There is hardly a quarter of the capital which does not hold one or more of these places. Baccarat is the favourite game. Sometimes the play is fair and honest, but often it is not. These places are not easy to discover if one

is not initiated, and because the police are ever on the watch for them, the keepers have to be very chary as to whom they admit. They never know if a new member is not a plain clothes policeman. One hears a lot of the police being "squared" in Paris but I should like to take this opportunity of paying tribute to their honesty and fairmindedness. On the whole, there does not exist a better body of men in any capital than the Paris police.

A peep into any of the *tripots* is worth while but it is advisable not to play. One finds a room, it may be in a cellar or a room in a flat thick with smoke and the foul odour of unwashed humanity. Anything it depends on the size and importance of the *tripot*, from fifty to one hundred people will be found there. There are all nationalities gathered round the tables, but, from whatever country they come, there is the same marble like look on all the faces. It is so easy to pick out an habitual gambler once you have seen one. Some of the players, many of them in fact, are waiters who have come straight from the cafés and restaurants with your tips and mine in their pockets to try their luck in the *tripot*. You will find a sprinkling of clerks and shop people, but not many, this class usually confines its gambling to the race courses around Paris.

Many of the frequenters of the gambling hells are swarthy and greasy in appearance. They have numerous rings flashing on their fingers, a diamond sparkles in their *tie*. They have a suave way with them these men and out on the streets in the cafés and the music hall promenades, are the women who are providing these *souteneurs* with the money they fling on to the green baize cloth. Easy come easy go, is their motto. Often one finds women of the Underworld in the gambling hells, for the women are worse gamblers than the men.

Play begins soon after dinner and continues far into the night. Many hells run afternoon sessions as well. They make their profit, of course by means of the *cagnotts*, in other words, the percentage the house rakes in from every winner. Sometimes a dispute arises and there is an ugly row, a pistol shot rings out, or a knife

flashes. Then there is silence. People look at one another, not with any particular sense of horror for a crime committed, because many of those present are already hardened in crime of all kinds, but because they are all more or less in the same boat, nobody can afford to have a police case arise out of the little "accident." Soon the matter is arranged. If the victim is dead, he is carried out of the *tripot* when the coast is clear, and the body is dumped down in a deserted street. And another crime is added to the already terribly long list of mysteries of the Paris Underworld. If the victim is merely wounded, he will most likely be taken in a cab to a hospital. The people who take him there will fade away quickly, and the Paris hospital authorities are all against giving any information to the police. If the police get wind of the affair and insist on an inquiry, it is a hundred to one that the victim himself has not a particularly brilliant record and will refuse to give details of the affray which brought him to the hospital. So in either case the *tripot* does not suffer.

Sometimes, of course, the police raid the gambling hells and round up those present. Instantly it is known that the police have arrived, everyone makes a hasty grab for the money that is on the tables. Many who have had an unlucky evening have finished up winning by reason of a police raid. There is also a scramble to get rid of revolvers and other weapons, for there is a law against carrying arms without a police permit, and the inhabitants of the Underworld are not the sort of people who are likely to seek such permission. Therefore, revolvers are thrown away or, if there is time, hidden beneath cushions and sofas. A few words in tiny type appear in the *faits divers* columns of the Paris newspapers, and that is all that is heard of the matter. The keepers of the *tripot* may be kept in prison awhile and they may even be sentenced to a term of imprisonment, but it is quite likely that the *cursus*, which I have explained elsewhere, may be invoked in their favour, and very soon they will be the hosts in another little gambling hell. Oh a very merry life!

Besides the places where card games to the exclusion

of all other forms of gambling are indulged in there are the clandestine betting establishments. Bookmaking in France was prohibited a good many years ago. The Pari Mutuel booths from which the Government takes a large percentage, is the only recognised form of betting on horse racing. But it stands to reason that, with meetings going on seven days a week around Paris during the racing season, there must be thousands of men and women who want to bet, but have neither the time nor the opportunity to attend a racecourse in order to back their "fancy." Clandestine betting establishments were very numerous before the war but I feel sure that the number in Paris alone has tripled since racing was resumed after the Armistice. Bars and cafes that would not have thought of receiving bets from customers before are now quite ready to oblige. Sometimes a bookmaker will be found ready to attend to customers, but more often than not one has to write down one's bet on a piece of paper hand it over the bar with the money, and then return the next day to collect the winnings—if any. It is not the bar keeper who does the bookmaking in these cases, the bet is transferred and very often goes through several hands before it reaches the bookmaker. The bar keeper will hand the bet over to a vegetable hawker, who is one of the bookmaker's agents, and from the hawker it will pass perhaps to another café or bar before it reaches the person for whom it is intended.

Before the war I visited a most interesting clandestine betting establishment. It existed right up to the time hostilities commenced. It was situated in a corner of the Palais Royale at the top of the Rue Vivienne. There is a flight of steps leading down into the Palais Royale. On the right hand corner was an underground *bière* cellar. It was kept by a German and fifty per cent of the frequenters were Germans too. One went down about fifty steps, and came to a terribly dirty series of cellars, crowded so that one had to fight one's way in. An unshaven German in his shirt sleeves would put down a mug of Munchener before you—you had to have it whether or no—and then when your eyes became more accustomed to the semi-darkness you would find a tape machine

in a corner of one of the cellars. In another corner was a table at which were sitting two men, the bookmaker and his clerk. You went to the tape and saw the names of the runners and jockeys come up and then you went over to the table and made your bet. The minimum stake with the *Paris Mutuel* is five francs but the bookmaker here would take anything from one franc upwards. If you won, you were paid as soon as the names of the winners came up on the tape. There were dozens and dozens of men going in and out of the *bierkeller* every afternoon when there was racing and I could never understand why this place did not attract the attentions of the police. It was the most brazen thing of its kind I have ever seen.

Since the war another kind of club has sprung up in Paris. It is the night club but it has nothing in common with similar organisations in London. I know that there are night clubs in England which are respectable to the point of dullness but in Paris nobody can charge them with being either respectable or dull. During the war, or rather at the beginning everything shut up tight at eight thirty then gradually the law was relaxed, but for a very long time every restaurant and café shut at nine thirty, and nobody could obtain any liquid refreshment after that hour in a theatre or music hall. Consequently there was a great demand from allied officers on leave and some others, for a place where a drink, a dance and some sort of amusement, could be obtained. This of course was the opportunity of the Underworld. First one place, then another began to open up in a quiet sort of way. These places were the forerunners of the Paris night clubs.

One of the first of the clandestine houses of entertainment was in the Rue de Londres. This was a flat on the second floor of a most respectable house. The police used to wink at it I suppose, because all night long and until the day was breaking, there was a long line of taxis and private cars. Two or three policemen would be patrolling outside, and if any dispute arose with a cab driver the "agents" quickly settled it. The part of the flat which was open to the public consisted

of two fairly large rooms. Near the open doors which separated them was a piano. About ten o'clock a dowdy little woman would appear and sit down at the piano, and begin a selection of tangos and "rags." People danced if they liked, but they had to order champagne whether they liked it or not. Champagne cost twenty-five francs a bottle which in those days was considered very dear. But, unlike the real night clubs, there was no charge for admission. Nevertheless, not everybody was admitted, the woman at the door would say the place was full up, and slam the door in the face of anybody whose presence was not desired. Every evening the flat was crowded with British, French, Belgian and American officers. When the American Army came over, the officers of their Army were in the majority. Then other places began to open up.

In a flat in the Rue de Liège (*née* Rue de Berlin) there was dancing to a gramophone. Out in the Avenue Victor Hugo near the Bois de Boulogne a most gorgeous place opened. The dancing craze was then beginning to reach Paris. Following the officers and their women companions came the members of the Underworld dispensing cocaine and other drugs. There were fights and scandals of all kinds. An American divorcee who became entangled with the son of a French general, was expelled from the country. Some of the places shut down but not for long. They were making a mint of money and were prepared to take risks in proportion.

Two small theatres started in the Rue Caumartin, just off the Boulevard des Capucines. The performances staged there were of no importance at all. The bars did all the trade. The intervals were extraordinarily long and the jazz bands made infernal music for the dancers who crowded every nook and corner of the theatres. At the time of the German offensive in March, 1918 the night life craze was at its height. Despite the law, there was hardly a street in the centre of Paris which did not hold a house where music, drink and dancing could be found. Many an officer who came to Paris on leave was ruined through making acquaintance with this phase of the Paris Underworld. In one house near

the Arc de Triomphe there were bedrooms. The house was crowded with American officers, many of whom had overstayed their leave. I know of two tragedies connected with this particular house.

A man who was exceedingly well known in New York City through his plays and other theatrical enterprises, became a regular frequenter there. He had left behind him in New York a wife and a grown up daughter. This man held a commission in the American Red Cross and had important funds in his hands. Through becoming entangled with women in the Underworld he spent all his own money, and then there was a deficit in his funds. The sum was not very important, and his friends had he told them of his trouble would have come to his assistance. But he told nobody. One day he was missing. His cap was found on a bridge. In it was a message in French and English. Some days later his body was found floating in the Seine.

Another man whose name is that of a famous weekly paper published in New York, came to Paris with the Knights of Columbus. He was very wealthy and took rooms in one of the best known hotels but he hardly ever slept there. He too was a frequenter of the house near the Arc de Triomphe spent all his time there, and got into entanglements. He was deported by order of the American Provost Marshal in Paris. As the ship in which he sailed was entering New York harbour he was found dead. It was never clearly established but it was strongly suspected that he committed suicide. These are but two of the tragedies which occurred through people getting out of their depth in the Underworld.

One night early in April, 1918 when the Germans were for the second time nearing Paris, I attended one of the two little theatres in the Rue Caumartin. My companion was an American newspaperman. We were standing leaning over the balcony looking down into the theatre where people were dancing. It had been a critical day. The Government was considering whether it should go to Bordeaux again. The Ministry of Finance and the Crédit Lyonnais Bank had already packed up securities and despatched them to places of safety. That

day I had been to the British Embassy and the American Embassy. Both were pessimistic, and both were ready to go away from Paris. But here in this theatre one might have thought they were already celebrating Victory. There was shouting and screaming which almost drowned the jazz band. There was dancing of the maddest kind. Champagne corks were popping, drunken men and women showing all the evidence of cocaine taking were reeling about all over the place. And a few miles away the German guns were thundering.

'Is this Dope or Hope?' my American friend asked me.

Now the war is over, and the two theatres in the Rue Caumartin have turned themselves into night clubs. One is almost ultra-respectable and is run by a once well-known singer of Franco-Greek origin who has been heard many times in musical comedy in London. The other can lay no claims to respectability and, in fact, does not. It has been closed down several times but it always manages to open up again. Here will be found the choicest collection of international crooks that one could wish to find. Here are confidence men from London, American gunmen straight from the Bowery, cardsharps from Italy and a host of other men who have come to the Mecca of the International Underworld. There is a jazz band, the trap drummer of which is a full blooded negro once a boxer. I first saw this man when he was in the French Foreign Legion. He has been reported dead many times but like Mark Twain's his death was greatly exaggerated. He is not a man to pick a quarrel with, as several Americans have found to their cost. Now he is in the jazz band at the . . . club, all dressed up in a dinner suit, with a good showing of war ribbons. The dancing floor is tiny but there is not a vacant inch on it when the band strikes up. Upstairs there is a bar usually with a crowd four or five deep waiting to be served. You can get anything you like at this club from champagne to cocaine. The latter is just as popular as the former, and costs a little less. The club managers take no responsibility for anything which may happen to you. If they did, they would have their hands full.

Men who have deserted from the American Army, and some from the British Army and other armies as well, are to be found here every night drunk or sober or doped. A man or woman will pick a quarrel with you for no apparent reason but the reason will be there just the same. Confidence men will try and trick you women will try and rob you either openly or by stealth. By stealth I mean they will plead hard for a box of chocolates or a bouquet of flowers, and if for peace and quietness' sake you purchase something from a wandering young woman with these articles for sale they will eventually find their way back to the management who give the woman a percentage on what they have made a man buy. One box of chocolates can provide quite a steady income.

There have been several very audacious robberies brought off in Paris by the American gunmen, and many of these coups have been hatched in this particular club. Strangely enough there is always a sprinkling of quite respectable people present as even now in Paris except on particular occasions dancing is not allowed after two a.m. But in the club it goes on all night and well into the early hours when the night birds leave but not for their nests. They are hungry and make for *les Halles*, the Paris Central Markets, of which I have told in another chapter.

CHAPTER IX

THE RACING UNDERWORLD

IN another chapter of this book I have referred briefly to clandestine betting establishments in Paris, but the subject is such an important one that it is necessary to develop it at greater length. When the war broke out, racing in France came to an end, and from the first day of mobilisation until some months after the Armistice there was no racing on which betting was allowed, but during the last two years of the war the Government decided to permit "trials," *for the sake of the breeding of French horses*. The public was not admitted to these "trials," and consequently there was no betting by outsiders but it was generally understood that the owners and particularly the trainers betted very heavily between themselves.

Since racing was resumed in France there has been an enormous increase in the turnover of money put on horses, and this has led to a corresponding increase in clandestine betting. To-day practically everyone bets tinker, tailor soldier sailor, they all vie with one another to get rich quick. It would seem as if the much lauded thrift of the French people came to an end with the war, for nowadays very few think of saving money, and everyone gambles in some form or other.

Some years ago the French turf was notorious for crooked practices but the Augean and other stables were cleaned out. Since racing was resumed there have been several ugly rumours of "pulling" and also "doping" horses, and one of these days there is likely to be an open scandal.

In the Racing Underworld there is a large army of men and women who live by pitting their wits against the authorities, for, as I have explained in another place, bookmaking in France is prohibited, but this does not

prevent the Underworld from amassing large sums of money by making clandestine "books."

A paternal government legalised betting in France for the sake of "the improvement of the breed of horses," but of course the public cares very little and knows less about the breeding of horses—it is just interested in what may be made out of racing. But there is no reason to criticise the Government for legalising betting, for allowing betting on the racecourses, as the State realises money by these means, money which otherwise would have to come out of the taxpayers' pockets.

Twenty years ago, from five to six thousand persons would gather on a Parisian racecourse on a weekday, roughly fifteen thousand on a Sunday, while the day the Grand Prix was run, there would be 100 000 people at Longchamp. But all this has changed. There are hardly ever fewer than 30 000 people racing on a weekday, rather more than 100 000 on a Sunday and last Grand Prix day (June, 1920), there were nearly 450,000 people at Longchamp.

There has been another tremendous change in the turnover of monies put on horses. On the course entrance to which used to cost only one franc, there were betting booths where one bought tickets for the units of five, fifty and one hundred francs. In the enclosure there were booths where the minimum amount one could put on was ten francs, and there were also some booths for fifty, one hundred and five hundred franc bets. To-day, not only have all these booths been doubled, but booths have been added for five hundred and one thousand franc bets.

It is quite common to see people buying ten one thousand franc tickets and it is a poor day when the Pari-Mutuel does not take in between two and three million francs. On Sundays last year (1920) the takings at the betting booths amounted to five, six and seven million francs, and on the Grand Prix day nearly fourteen million francs were taken at the betting booths. On all these sums the Government takes eleven per cent.

So much for the official betting figures. Now for the clandestine betting. Here, of course, it is impossible

to control the figures, but good authorities estimate that every day between three and four million francs are taken in Paris, and a like amount in the provinces. Until 1891 bookmaking in France was allowed and numerous Englishmen made a very good thing out of it. In 1903 the *Pari-Mutuel* was instituted but bookmaking was still allowed. Then came the law which prohibited bookmaking, but very soon the bookmakers set to work again because the real gamblers saw that the *Pari Mutuel* did not pay the odds which could be obtained from *les books*.

When walking about the *pesage* at any one of the Parisian courses you will hear a man or woman whisper to a man "What odds so and so?"

"Three to one" is the reply—also given in a whisper. "A thousand louis," replies the first speaker. "Is it all right?"

"All right," answers back the "book." And that is all. No ticket passes from hand to hand; no entry is made in a notebook. There is no trace of the operation. If the horse loses, the bettor sends his twenty thousand francs the next day to the bookmaker's private residence. Should the horse win the bookmaker sends the sixty thousand francs by post. These operations are not very harmful—except to the State—because they are carried out by men and women who can afford to lose. But nevertheless, clandestine betting in Paris is draining the pockets of the poorer classes who have not the time to go racing during the week but who resort daily to betting with bookmakers.

The real bookmakers operate on the racecourses, and generally have nothing to do with clandestine betting in the city. This is carried on by a separate organization which employs a multitude of people in the Underworld. Betting goes on everywhere—in the wineshops, in cafes, in government offices, in hairdressers and most amusing of all, in the big shops.

The betting Underworld is divided into sectors and each man has charge of a sector. Between nine in the morning and lunch time he works his sector. He begins in the big shops and government offices soon after the staffs arrive. Later he goes to the *bistros* as the wine-

shops are called, for here he can pick out his customers who drop in just before lunch

The tout does not attract much attention in the shops, where he appears to be an early customer. He goes from counter to counter. Furtively the employees slip little pieces of paper into his hand. To the paper, on which is written the name of the horse and the amount

to be put on is pinned a banknote. The sums are not large. The betters split up sums of ten or twenty francs, putting two francs fifty centimes and sometimes even one franc twenty five on each horse. Often systems are worked out. In sums of five then fifteen and twenty francs the tout has quite soon collected several thousand francs in one of the big shops.

Then he goes to the hairdressers. It is a curious phenomenon of Paris that all hairdressers bet and with the possible exception of the Chantilly cafés there are no places where one hears more tips for the races. The tout's work is more simple here than in the shops. Before his arrival one of the assistants has already collected the betting slips from his colleagues and from the customers and the tout goes away with an average of two hundred francs.

From the hairdressers the tout goes to the printing works where eight men out of every ten bet and from there he goes to the newspaper offices where he reaps a rich harvest. Then he goes to the tobacco shops where the stout lady behind the counter acts as a clearing house. Then to the *bistro* to finish his morning.

He takes a seat and calls for a drink looking for all the world like an ordinary customer who has much time on his hands. But his customers know where he is to be found and there is a constant procession passing before him dropping slips of paper. When he returns home for lunch the tout has collected anything from ten to thirty thousand francs. It all depends on the sector he is working. It will easily be understood that the organisation of the racing Underworld amasses two million francs every morning.

In the evening the touts go and see their chief, and

there is a general reckoning. The winnings are worked out at *Pari Mutuel* odds, and the next morning the *tout* sets out with the money to pay the lucky few who have succeeded in finding a winner.

The police seldom manage to arrest the people engaged in this nefarious traffic of clandestine betting. The authorities have several schemes for putting an end to the matter, but it is doubtful whether they will be able to do so. Perhaps the most feasible scheme would be to introduce *Pari Mutuel* booths in Paris and the other large cities, but even then it is quite probable there would always be customers for the members of the Racing Underworld.

CHAPTER X

LES APACHES

PROBABLY no men have been more written about than the French Apaches. For years they have played their part in fact and fiction, and sometimes fiction has been mingled with facts. In plain English they are just hooligans, but they received the name of Apaches because of their real or fancied likeness to the Red Indian tribe of that name. The police tell us that the gangs of Apaches no longer exist. Perhaps they are not so ferocious as they were some ten or fifteen years ago and certainly the streets in the central districts of Paris are more safe than they were at that time—but it would be idle to pretend that gangs of Apaches no longer exist in Paris. I am of the opinion that they always will exist and there appears to be no likelihood of them ever being put down—unless corporal punishment is introduced into France. At present there is no cat o' nine tails. London police court magistrates will bear evidence to the good the introduction of the cat did at the time of the heyday of hooliganism.

The Apache, therefore, has very little to fear. If he is caught young he will be sent to do his military service in the *Bataillon d'Afrique* the famous '*Bat d'As*,' the Regiment of the Naughty Boys as I christened them during the war—or they will be sent to a reformatory school. But these phases I shall deal with later. If the man caught in the toils of the law is too old to be sent to school or the army, there remains the ordinary way of punishment. But as I have pointed out elsewhere in this book, the *sursis* is ever on the side of the criminal, and an Apache may commit crimes and still keep out of prison. There is then very little risk of punishment and the gains are fairly large, so there are always plenty of Apaches.

The war between the Apaches and the police is eternal. The hatred of the former for the latter is quite fantastic. Youths of the quarters in which nine tenths of the Apaches are born are brought up from their cradles to hate the minions of the law, who are known to them in their argot as "*fiacs*" or "*raches*." The definition of the former word I am unable to give, and why the police should be known as "*cors*" I have never been able to gather. But call a policeman by the second epithet and he will emulate a bull and "*see red*."

The most famous battle cry of the Paris Apaches is "*Mort aux raches*." Some years ago I remember a young Englishman being arrested in very curious circumstances. He was on his way to Paris, his first visit, and in the train travelling from Boulogne to the French capital he met a Frenchman. The two men entered into conversation and the Englishman asked his companion what he should do if he lost himself in the street. The Frenchman told him he could always ask a policeman the way—the Paris policemen were as polite as their London colleagues. "How do you address a Paris policeman?" asked the Englishman. "Well," replied the Frenchman, "if you want to be very polite you go up to him and raising your hat you say, '*mort aux raches*.'" The Englishman thanked the Frenchman and leaving him at the Gare du Nord, proceeded to seek out a *sergent de ville* to ask him the way to some street or other. Very politely he raised his hat and said to the policeman "*Monsieur, mort aux raches est ce que vous, or rather a-vez vous—*" But he was not allowed to go any further. The policeman, an amiable man, knitted his eyebrows and shouted "*Fichez moi la paix, vous,*" which translated for polite ears means "Clear out of this." The Englishman was pained. Obviously his French had not been understood so standing there very politely with his hat in his hand and blowing a little, he tried again "*Monsieur, pardon mort aux raches*." The policeman thought he had to deal with a mad foreigner so took the young man along to the police station where there were explanations and apologies.

But to return to our Apaches. The quarters where

these men operate cannot be defined geographically. Either singly or in bands they wander all over Paris holding up late home going men and women and relieving them of their jewellery and money. Very often women decoys are used. A woman will accost a man in the street. If he stops to listen to her a shape will spring out of a doorway and hold up the waylaid one at the point of a revolver while his female companion dexterously goes through his pockets. If he shows fight matters will go badly with him for the Apache is not above shooting his victim although he prefers the knife which he will stick in between the third and fourth rib without the slightest noise. The Apaches do not stop at murder even when they know that the victim is not likely to be the possessor of much wealth. There is one case at least in the Paris police annals where a man was murdered in cold blood and the murderers (two of them) only obtained one franc.

Since a few years the Apaches have specialised in robbing the keepers of small wineshops. They will spend much time before they bring off the coup. After selecting the place which is to be robbed the bandits (there are usually two of them in jobs of this kind) will make discreet inquiries concerning the amount of trade done by the shopkeeper. The next step is to have drinks in the place so as to discover the lay of the land meaning whereabouts the till is. They will then visit the shop buy some drinks and wait there until the place is empty for a moment then one of them will attack the man or woman with a weapon that is noiseless—either a knife or a hatchet—and after stuffing the victim's mouth with rags to prevent screams alarming the passers by they will ruse the till and decamp. These crimes are so common in Paris that they very rarely achieve more than four or five lines in the daily press. Sometimes small grocers' shops are picked out for these acts of robbery with violence, but very seldom do the Apaches go in for crime on a large scale, such as safe-breaking. This is left to a different class of criminal.

Readers will have seen types of Apaches represented on the films or the English music hall stage. I think

the Apache first became known to music hall audiences some years ago when the Apache dance was introduced across the Channel. The clothes the male and female Apache wear are almost a uniform. The man either covers his hair (which he usually wears long) with a cloth cap or a black or blue tam-o'-shanter. His shirt has no collar, but sometimes there is a neckcloth tied round the neck. Around the waist there is usually a scarf, most often a red one. The trousers are generally of corduroy and very baggy, but fitting closer round the ankles. The coat is of a nondescript kind, and the male Apache generally wears canvas shoes, especially when he is on the prowl. His female companion, known as a *gigolette*, can always be picked out on the outer boulevards. Her hair—she never wears a hat—is very often elaborately dressed with a heavy fringe in front. Her blouse is anything that is bright, and rivals the rainbow for colours. Her shirt, of black or blue, is fairly short, and is worn very tight. She generally wears high buttoned boots. But there is one trade mark of the *gigolette* which invariably stamps her for what she is—her apron or pinafore, which completes her outfit.

The *gigolette* stands beneath a street lamp-post and watches with a quick eye for a likely *miché*. When she makes up her mind, she goes gliding after him with feline-like stealthy steps. She jogs his arm and whispers, '*Où va tu, chéri?*' If he stops to listen she will endeavour to entice him somewhere where there are no lights. And this is not difficult, for a few paces away from the outer boulevards or the fortifications, there are streets that are as deserted as the desert itself, and 'as dark, lit only by the light of the moon or a none too frequent lamp-post. It is when the man stands still for a moment that the Apache glides out of the shadows, and either holds up his prey and frightens him into submission, or else, knowing that dead men tell no tales, stabs him prior to stealing his pocket book, then fades away again into the shadows.

Even if the *miché* does not respond to the wiles of the *gigolette*, all hope of reward is not lost. When the man turns off the main thoroughfare into a quieter street,

the woman takes an active part in half throttling him while her lover the Apache puts the finishing touch to his discomfiture. In all the big cities of France there are gangs of Apaches. They are particularly numerous at the ports, where drunken sailors are the usual victims. But in Paris and especially on the outer boulevards and the fortifications, there are nightly crimes, many of which never find their way into the newspapers. The real reason for this is that there is so much crime in the Underworld that a hold up more or less does not matter, and unless there are some picturesque details to be described the most the crime will make in the *faits divers* of the daily newspapers is two, or at the most three lines in small type.

The next time you are sitting supping and drinking champagne in the Rat Mort or the Abbaye you should remember that not two minutes away there are prowling men and women who live like jackals on what the better dressed harpies of the night restaurants have left as unwanted. The side streets leading off the Place Pigalle the Place Blanche and the Place Clichy are the happy hunting grounds of the Apaches but you will find them anywhere around Paris dwelling never far from the *fortifs*, as the fortifications are known in the Apaches' argot. He has a language of his own which is not un-picturesque. The Black Maria is a 'salad basket' and the prison is the violin. When one Apache invites another member of his gang to drink an absinthe with him, he will ask if he will strangle a parrot and when he enters the *bistrot*, the drinking shop he will rap on the counter and call for two vitriols. A policeman, when he is not known as a 'cow' is referred to as a "*fic*". Every member of a gang has a nickname by which he is universally known throughout the quarter. "*Bibi le Frisé*" will be the chosen companion of "*Zizi la Blanchisseuse*", the first named being so called because he has curly hair, and the second because at some previous time in her history she worked in a laundry. Sometimes a *gigolette* will attract the attention of some man from quite another world, and if she is a girl who cares more for pearls and clothes than for the passionate de-

votion of her Apache lover, she will leave him to follow the other man. But sometimes, as in the historic case of "Gaby la Rouge," they revert to type.

Vengeance is one of the primeval passions of the Apache. It is the half-brother of jealousy, and woe betide any man discovered taking away a *gigolette* from a real blown-in-the-glass Apache. Their vengeance is terrible, and many a man has been found dead nastily cut to pieces in some quiet back street, with all possible marks of identification removed from the body. The remains are taken to the Morgue, but never identified and they are eventually buried in a nameless grave. It is remarked in La Villette that Charles le Blond appears to have gone away, and little Lisette—Lisette with the red heeled shoes—has eyes that are redder than her heels. She follows Georges le Costand around like a little lamb being led to the slaughter. She dances with him at night in a Bal Musette, hugged tightly in his arms, but her thoughts are no doubt with Charles le Blond, of whose disappearance she dare ask no questions.

Many fights are waged over a girl, and sometimes whole gangs will go out to fight a stand up battle fought with knives and revolvers.

The women, who are such an intimate part of the Apache's life, are often of the criminal type—but not always. The police know of cases where women of respectable families have left their homes and their employment to throw in their lot with these beings of the Underworld. A particular case occurs to me. The police surprised a gang of Apaches who were robbing a jeweller's shop. There was a woman who was keeping a lookout for the police. When the guardians of the peace arrived on the scene they made an attempt to arrest a young man who was leaving the shop, but the woman sprang on them like a tiger, biting and scratching to set free her man. When she saw she was about to fail, she whipped out a revolver from her clothing and began to shoot at the detectives. One was wounded and the police had to use their own revolvers in self-defence. The woman, or girl rather, for she was no more, was wounded and arrested. She refused to give any account of herself,

but the police found out that she was a clerk who lived at home with her people, who had no idea she was associating with these bandits

One of the most famous of the women Apaches was the notorious Casque d'Or, whom I remember quite well. She earned her nickname because of her wealth of golden hair, which was its natural colour. She was the Queen of a gang of Apaches who terrorised a whole district on the northern side of the Rue Lafayette. She became legendary, the Golden Girl, for whom men risked their lives and liberties. The newspapers rang with her fame, recounting fights waged with knives and revolvers for possession of this Queen of the Underworld. The police started a campaign against this gang, but were never able to round them up. There were many fights fought at long distance, and M. Lépine who was then Prefect of Police, was on his mettle. The police in the quarter were doubled, then trebled and finally, after a thrilling fight, most of the Casque d'Or gang were arrested. The woman escaped, but was finally run to earth in a low lodging house. Her beauty captivated the jury which tried her, and she received a nominal sentence. As soon as she was free music hall managers outbid one another to engage her to appear in revue. She consented, and for a time drew all Paris, but the craze very soon passed and Casque d'Or was once more drifting to the Underworld. She dropped out of the public eye for a time, and the last I heard of her was in a travelling show which visited the fairs around Paris.

The "show" business by the way, seems to be the last resource of most of the French notorious characters. When the Moulin Rouge was in a blaze of glory—before perishing in a blaze of real flames—and the Can-can was the sensation of Paris, Nini Patte en l'Air the daughter of a washerwoman was drawing hundreds of people to see her display her nether limbs and her lingerie. Russian grand dukes, princes, diplomats and financiers flocked to the Moulin Rouge to pay homage at the shrine of Nini Patte-en-l'Air. But the Can-can danced its way out of fashion. Some years afterwards I was visiting a fair on the Boulevard Cluchy and came across a small

travelling menagerie. A stout, elderly woman in tights and heels disclosed herself as the ex-dancer, whom I found feeding a mangy bear. But she was still cheery, was Nina. She told me that the Can-can having had its day she was learning the tango. 'I must dance with the times,' she said. Some years later I came across Nina again, very aged. She was selling sweets at a street corner. Later she died in abject poverty. I imagine Casque d'Or met with a similar end.

Other Apache gangs have queens, but none have ever achieved the notoriety of Casque d'Or. At the time of writing there is languishing in prison a young woman—all that is left of a gang who had a girl for its chief. There were six subordinates, each having for a nickname a day of the week. There was no Sunday. But "Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday" were each the Queen's lover for twenty-four hours. This gang fought many fights with other rival gangs, one of the most ferocious of which was the 'Belleville Boys' who used to try and subdue all rival gangs and very often succeeded. These fights are often planned some time ahead. After a long period of delusory fighting the heads of the rival factions will meet and decide to fight a pitched battle. The battlefield is chosen with forethought. Sometimes it is a piece of waste ground or if such is not available the Apaches will fix upon a nice quiet street in which to settle their differences. London hooligans used to fight with their belts, but the Apaches are always well armed despite laws against carrying weapons. Revolvers are the favourite arms. The "troops" will deploy when given orders by their leaders, and then they will start to fire, keeping up a running fusillade. The battle ends when one side or the other leaves the battleground and the men of the gang which remains are adjudged the victors. Men are very often killed, and there are always many wounded. The dead are left, but the wounded are spirited away. It is a point of honour with the Apaches never to disclose particulars of how they came by their wounds. This code of honour is recognised by the police, who know it is perfectly useless to try and probe the matter.

One may ask what the police are doing while a battle royal between Apaches is in progress. What happens is as follows. A couple of cyclist police out on patrol will hear the shots being fired and will rush up to the scene. Finding themselves outnumbered they will send for reinforcements. When the latter arrive they will endeavour to put an end to the battle but doing so is very much like a passer-by trying to interfere in a row between a husband and wife. They cannot say, like the Irishman "Is this a private fight or is anybody allowed to join in?" It is indeed a private fight for the two sides, as soon as the police show signs of interfering will form a united front against the hated foe the *flacs*. Then begins another and perhaps a fiercer battle. Both sides empty their revolvers firing furiously and both sides incur casualties. Usually only the wounded among the Apaches are arrested. The others manage to get away.

The exploits of the Bonnot gang of which I shall have something to say presently first called attention to the excessive use of revolvers among the Apaches. The question was discussed in Parliament and the press but without any definite result. It was suggested that in order to put down crime in the Underworld it would be necessary to control the manufacture of firearms but opposition arose from the manufacturers themselves, who pointed out that their industry would be severely threatened. And besides no law would stop the clandestine manufacture of firearms. Then came the suggestion to prohibit the carrying of firearms except by persons who could obtain special permission from the police by proving their *bona fides*. And as an offset to this it was suggested to arm the police with revolvers. But then again, it was pointed out that it would be dangerous for the general public if people obtained official permission to carry revolvers and swordsticks and there always remained the question of disarming the Apaches who were already armed. The Chamber of Deputies then drew up a report to change the existing law, giving magistrates power to inflict a term of imprisonment, ranging from six days to six months on anyone carrying

arms without a licence and a sentence of from two to five years on anyone committing robbery under arms. But the law never came into force, it was dropped. The existing laws are too feeble to prevent the numerous crimes carried out with the aid of a revolver.

Another weapon of the Apache is the knife, and when used by an expert, a very dangerous weapon it is. The Apache likes it because it is silent and does not act as a magnet to a wandering cyclist policeman as does the revolver. Knuckle dusters are not very often used. They are known to the Apache as *poing americains*, literally, an American fist.

Some years ago there was an Apache who was the terror of the police. His name was Leboeuf. Whole districts were afraid of him. His daring and audacity knew no bounds. Crime after crime was committed by this man, who worked single handed. The police could never catch him. He slipped through their fingers each time. He would defend himself, with a revolver in each hand, firing blindly in the direction of his hated foes and nearly always inflicting losses. A special force of police was told off to run Leboeuf to earth. He must have known of it, because he appeared one day in broad daylight wearing a specially made suit of clothes. Attached to a bullet proof waistcoat was an appliance to which were fixed numerous long spikes of steel. Strapped to his arms were other spikes. He was a curious looking object. The spikes of course were intended for his defence if and when he came into close contact with the police. He carried a veritable little arsenal in his pockets.

But he was not much longer at liberty. From a woman the police learned where Leboeuf intended to pass a certain night. A very strong force of police surrounded the house, then a posse of them armed to the teeth broke into the room. The Apache fought a terrible fight and put several men on the sick list before he was finally overcome. He was tied up with rope and carried away to the police station to await trial. One Saturday morning he felled the warder who was bringing food into the cell. Leboeuf dashed out into the corridor, but found his

passage barred. Nevertheless, he fought his way past the guards and went up to the top floor of the prison from whence he climbed to the roof and refused to come down.

Police and prison officials alternately cajoled and threatened but the Apache was adamant. The Prefect was sent for but still Lebocuf refused to budge. Finally, they sent for the man's lawyer, Maitre Boucheron and still the Apache continued to sit on the roof occasionally flinging pieces of stone at the *flics*. A counsel of war was held and it was decided to send for the fire brigade, who were to use their escapes as a means of getting policemen to the roof to bring down Lebocuf. Lebocuf watched the preparations with calm. When everything was ready and the police were about to ascend Lebocuf walked slowly to the edge of the coping then raising his arms above his head like a man about to dive into the sea, he jumped into space and fell into the police yard. When he was picked up he was dead. His neck was broken but he had cheated justice after all.

* * * * *

In my capacity as a journalist I have had occasion to make excursions behind the scenes of Apache life. I cannot truthfully give a word picture of a misunderstood man taking his ease in the midst of an adoring family. The Apache has no family, he has no wife, he has no home. But he has a companion, a woman, a Thing, a chattel. And very contented she is to be such. I know of no Society for the Reformation of Apaches and if there were I would not be a subscriber. The thing is unthinkable, frankly impossible. If you know Belleville and La Villette as well as I do, you will agree there is no way back for the Apache unless he is caught very young, and even then the only way back is through the ranks of the army. For discipline is what the youth of the slums requires and quite several severe doses of corporal punishment. I have explained in another section of this book the large part that temperament plays in forming the character of men and women who slip down into the Underworld. For those who are born on the sub-strata, which is separated from

the Underworld by a very thin crust and who drop down to the bottomless pit beneath, environment must be blamed, environment plus temperament. They not only belong to the submerged Tenth but they are the People Who Never Had A Chance. Never will have a chance either while conditions remain as they are at present. To say the French social laws are lax is a truism but I am afraid it will always be a truism. In England and America men and women wallow in filthy slums; the sexes drink and fight together. The men become cracksmen in the former country and burglars in the second. It is merely a question of a word. The women when they are not fighting the men fight each other. There is vice but not mere viciousness.

In France it is different. There are no slums in Paris in the same sense as there are in London and New York. In the French capital you will find houses which would be qualified as slum dwellings in England and America, cheek by jowl with the temples of luxury. That is one of the eternal paradoxes of Paris and one which foreigners can never understand. In these festering eyesores there is not vice as the term is generally understood but viciousness. The difference is more than subtle it is infinite. Many will tell you they see no difference between Charles le Blond and Bibi le Costaud, who slinks like a rat in a hole waiting for some beotted late home-going bourgeois to come his way that he may relieve him of his purse, meanwhile his woman prowls along the exterior boulevards trying to collect the "white pieces" for her man. They can see no difference, I say, between Bibi and the sleek, well-dressed *souventeur*, who sits in a gambling club meanwhile his woman walks round the promenade of the Folies-Begere. I agree that the ultimate object of both is the same, but in the beginning there was a difference. The educated *souventeur* is a social pest, a horrible parasite who, in nine cases out of ten is the worst kind of bully there exists in the Underworld. Usually he retains his hold over the woman only by terrorising her. He thrashes her when she fails to bring home sufficient money allowing her only enough to clothe her body for attracting the men. He was probably brought up to some trade or

profession. He has no excuse unless the streak of yellow in his character is an excuse.

I have explained the *souteneur* but to explain the Apache is more difficult. I do not wish anybody to think I have any sort of sympathy with him. I have not. And even the French proverb "To understand all is to pardon all" is not applicable in this case. I do understand the Apache because I have studied him but I cannot pardon him. You find him born in deplorable surroundings living in the most unsanitary conditions that can possibly be imagined. Not ten per cent of the houses in Paris have bath rooms. The parents may be respectable people struggling to bring their children up decently. The boy will go to school but he will soon find street companions who will show him how school can be dodged. The precocious youth of Paris and of the large cities as well learn sexual secrets when about fourteen or fifteen years of age. The lax social laws throw wide open the doors to all kinds of knowledge. It is the same with the young girls. Purity is rare indeed and many a miss of fifteen has her accredited lover and lover in this case does not mean boy or sweetheart. It means everything that is implied by marital relations. When about fifteen the boy will perhaps go to work in a factory. He may run straight and become a useful citizen or he may become a loafer. In the latter case if he is impressionable he will soon get into touch with other lads who are already deeply steeped in vice. One must remember there are no restrictions in France on either juvenile smoking or drinking. I am not a prohibitionist but I am strongly in favour of restricting youths from procuring alcohol. Strong drink of every kind is to be had by the young man. The streets are streets of adventure. Prostitution is licenced. Vice of every kind is rampant. His sense of right and wrong is naturally blunted.

The majority of French workmen are socialists—in fact communism is ever increasing. The French are not active in their socialism but their press and their public meetings breathe fire and brimstone. The youth hears a lot of talk about the sacred rights of the worker.

He hears it at home, in the street and in the workshop. Private property is not sacred. He soon learns his lesson like a parrot. The police are his enemies because they are in the pay of the greater enemy the bourgeois, who "grinds the faces of the poor." He still has a chance of going straight. He may lose all the illusions he ever had, but from that state to crime is a wide step. Not too wide to be bridged, however. It may begin from a mere spirit of adventure by joining a gang which roams the streets, seeking a fight with another gang. These rows which lead to the fights usually occur in the *bal musettes* which I have described elsewhere. A man or youth will dance once too often with another youth's girl. That is quite sufficient to start a fight that ends in the death of one or other of the people party to it.

The youth will by this time have picked up with a girl, and upon the girl's character a whole lot depends. Not all of them are of the frail sisterhood but the girls, too, have the same temptations as the boys, and the sexes are much thrown together. In London and other great cities in England, one is accustomed to see men and girls out together. The young men walk in a bunch followed by the girls who walk with linked arms. Occasionally the young men will jerk back a word over their shoulders. There may be some coarse jests and horseplay but that is all.

In Paris (I am speaking of the equivalent class), it is different. The young man and the young woman will go out together unescorted. Their Latin temperament and their environment, too perhaps takes no heed of coarse jest or horseplay. Their affection for one another is sincere deep real. I use the word affection where they would use the word love. It is love to them. "*L'amour*" in French is the Alpha and Omega of existence. Our Anglo-Saxon delicacy or false modesty whichever you will shies at the word and its meaning but the French see no vice where love is. Looked at from the worldly standpoint it is of course, just viciousness. I hope I have explained the reason and the passionate relationship between the youth and the girl. If the girl is able to keep her lover away from evil companions all will be

well, but if she cannot she will in nine cases out of ten, follow him in the way he has decided to go. It may be a simple burglary which is his first adventure in the criminal line. If he is caught and tried he will probably escape with a nominal sentence and be set free by reason of the *sésis*. I have seen young men up for trial in a Paris criminal court the fathers and mothers of whom have come with tears rolling down their cheeks to beg mercy for their boy. It is always the same tale the parents can never understand how their children have gone wrong.

The next time the youth is caught he will most likely be sent to serve a term in a kind of reformatory. From there he will go when his time comes to serve in the army to the *Bat d' Af* the Regiment of the Naughty Boys who serve their time in the army in North Africa. There is iron discipline in this regiment and sometimes (not always) it is sufficient to curb the criminal instinct latent in the conscript. During the war the Regiment of the Naughty Boys fought like demons and won innumerable medals and citations. In the columns of the *Daily Express* several times I had occasion to describe their gallantry notably in the epic fighting at the *Maison de Passeur* and again in the Gobay marshes. When their time is up they return to Paris and either become useful members of society or—Apaches. In the latter case they take to crime like a duck takes to water. Their environment has had an effect that army life could not undo. They become the desperadoes of the streets—the human hawks preying on the bourgeois. They have something of the audacity of the Wild West outlaw.

I remember some years ago a case which occurred within half an hour's tram ride from the Paris Opera House but for its cool impertinence it might have been staged somewhere where they film the cowboy dramas. Late one evening a tram left the starting place behind the Opera House to go to its destination at Pantin—a suburb of Paris. The way is straight up the Rue Lafayette. The tram went about three-quarters of its journey peacefully. The street is fairly hilly towards the top end

Just as the tram stopped to allow passengers to alight, out of the shadows there leapt four or five masked men. One jumped up beside the driver and by holding a revolver to his temple forced him to clamp on the brakes and bring the car to a standstill. Another man got up beside the conductor and relieved him of his satchel containing his day's takings. The rest went through the traincar, making great play with their revolvers and impudently raking in everybody's money and jewellery. Then they jumped off the car and, covering the driver and conductor with their revolvers, threatened to shoot them in their tracks if they gave an alarm before they were safely away. The whole affair was carried out in five minutes, and none of the gang was arrested—not for this particular crime at least.

In search of newspaper copy, I have mixed with Apaches in their favourite haunts, but it is not a pastime I recommend to visitors to Paris. I well remember being in one little café near the Halles when the place was raided by the police. It was a low-roofed, rather dirty little place, and I think the patron could have told a story or two concerning the disposal of stolen booty if he had liked. Scribbled on the walls were such things as "*Zin aime Bibi pour la rue*" and I daresay the lady d.d. too. There were a good many Zins and Bibis present that night. There was much strangling of parrots (it was before the prohibition of the sale of absinthe) and some fitful dancing of a kind you would not take your maiden aunt to see. But it was comparatively peaceful until the police made a raid. They were looking for somebody or other, and I have no idea whether the wanted person was there or not, but although I was taken there by a person in whose company I felt fairly safe, I certainly feared for my safety when the police came in. Ugly looks were cast in my direction as it was probably thought that I was a *mouchard* (police spy). The music stopped and there was a general scamper, not to escape but to get rid of revolvers and other weapons. Men and women were searched, names and addresses taken, and then the police left and I with them.

Once on journalistic adventure bent I visited a gentleman

named *trompe la Mort*" Mr the Deceiver of Death was the name by which this particular bandit was known to his associates and the police—the latter, however, knew his baptismal nomenclature. He was a delightful and witty man of about thirty two. On his right forearm was tattooed a guillotine, on his left arm were pictures of women. He had a lady friend with him when I dropped in. She was a dark and vicious rather ugly young person, a typical *gigolette* of the outer boulevards. *Trompe la Mort* was suspected of having caused the somewhat hasty death of several persons but the crimes had never been brought home to him. I may say that I was too tactful to introduce such a subject of conversation but we talked on many subjects. Fallieres was President at that time, and I do not think he would be flattered if he knew what my Apache friend thought of him. He spoke of the police with amused contempt. It was rather like a talkative fox giving his opinions of the hounds after a hard day's run.

Trompe la Mort has his domicile in a little room on the fourth floor of a little hotel in a narrow street leading off the Rue Lepic. All these places are called hotels, but they correspond to the English lodging houses. The Apaches never stay very long in the same house, but as there are thousands of them in Paris many of them of the most evil repute they are never at a loss for a home, if 'home' is the right word to use. I wanted to get Mr the Deceiver of Death's photograph but he laughingly told me I should find it in the Rogues Gallery at the Prefecture of Police so I did not insist. We parted on the best of terms and promised to meet again, but not professionally. We never did however, nevertheless I learnt what became of him some years afterwards. He served a sentence in prison and then came out to resume his old life as an Apache. He lived in this way until the war came, and although I never knew of it until a long time afterwards this was his history which I have obtained from the police records. He was called to the colours and rejoined his regiment. When he was mobilised he went to the police station where he was well known, and asked to see the commissaire, to whom he said,...

of the gang. No doubt Bonnot thought he was recognised and was about to be arrested.

But none of the gang cared a jot about taking his, it was part of their creed. Communism was only in its early stages then. Murders were committed two or three times a week, and public opinion demanded the arrest of the gang. This was a difficult matter. The police were tracking them, but each time they arrived at the lair, the birds had flown. Once they got there in time.

Bonnot was known to be in a house at Ivry. Detectives went there to arrest him. However Bonnot was ready and he shot Inspector Jouin afterwards making his escape. There was a reign of terror in the Paris banks. Bank messengers were never allowed to go out except in couples and then they were heavily armed. There were also armed guards in all the banks. One by one the police ran the gang to earth but the leaders were still at large. The attempted arrest of Bonnot himself was most dramatic. He was known to be in a house at Nogent on the river Marne not far from Paris. The police surrounded the house, but Bonnot who was no doubt waiting for them opened a heavy fire with an automatic rifle. For the whole afternoon he kept the police at bay. At last in desperation they decided to try and take him by stealth. A hay cart was procured and policemen, armed to the teeth were hidden in the hay. The cart was pushed towards the house but Bonnot poured a heavy fire into it. The police repelled. There was a veritable battle in which the bandit Bonnot was mortally wounded.

Bonnot did not stand his trial, but some of the other members of the gang did. Included among them were some women. One was nicknamed Claudine by the journalists at the trial. She was the living image of Gyps heroine, with her hair bobbed her lace collar and her sedate air. She served a short sentence and afterwards married another member of the gang. The two are now very prominent in French Communist circles. One man committed suicide a few moments after he

was arrested. He was taken to the Prefecture of Police, and after he had been through a preliminary examination in the magistrate's room he was being led downstairs to his cell supported on either side by a policeman. He was a big strong, red headed man, and twisting himself out of their grip he threw himself down head first on the stone stairs, dashing out his brains. He was already prepared for death when he was arrested, for when he was searched in his cell, a packet of poison was found hidden between the soles of his boots.

Other members of the gang fought desperately when they were arrested even the quiet looking "Raymond le Science". The trial was a long drawn out one. Only three of the gang were sentenced to death. The last scene was dramatic in the extreme. I cannot remember any trial which was so moving. Sentence was pronounced between eleven o'clock and midnight. There were about ten prisoners in the big oak wood dock. Separating each prisoner was a municipal guard. The jury were some time in coming to their verdict and while they were away the court gradually began to fill. Men and women in evening dress came on from the theatre. It was just like a long awaited first night. People stood on chairs munching sandwiches, talking and laughing and recognising friends in the body of the court and calling out to them. Then later actors and actresses arrived. Many of them had hurried from their dressing rooms to be present at the final scene, and they had had no time to remove their "make-up".

The few electric lights cast an eerie glow over the court, the multi coloured dresses of the women their flashing jewels and the gleaming white shirt fronts of the men. Down at the end of the court on the raised dais one caught glimpses of the red cloaked judges. Presently the jury came back and gave their verdict. There was such a hubbub that one could hear nothing. In vain the ushers shouted for silence, but the women's shrill voices drowned every other sound. People jostled and scrambled for better places from which to view the prisoners, and they

discussed their points as though they were so many cattle at a show. "Claudine" was the one person in court who preserved her poise and calm, and she listened to the sentences with an inscrutable smile on her face.

So ended the first attempt at the establishment of Communism in France.

CHAPTER XI

GABY LA ROUGE

PETIT LOUIS they called him in Belleville. His parents christened him Aristide but church names don't count for much in Belleville. Apaches and all kinds of interesting people live up there. Petit Louis was an Apache. When he was a small boy and was still Aristide he thought it would be rather fine to have a gun, a revolver and a knife. Aristide's father and mother had other views so they apprenticed him to a locksmith.

In the daytime he was fairly busy but the evenings were busier. There were the exploits of the Black Panthers and the Terrors of the Butte to follow—two bands of cheerful young gentlemen who used to meet in unfrequented streets and fire at one another with their revolvers. When they could get to close quarters they used their knives. Aristide thought this a fine life but neither band wanted him until he had proved his value.

Aristide found that quite easy. Repairing a lock in the flat belonging to a woman who was careless with her jewellery. Aristide had the opportunity of showing a fistful of gems to a few friends one evening and was thereupon unanimously elected a member of the Black Panthers. Then he wore his jet black hair in long wisps over his ears, stuck a half-smoked cigarette behind one of them and was christened Petit Louis.

Introducing Gaby. Gaby was a prepossessing young person who lived in Belleville but was not of Belleville. She worked in a factory, went straight home after work and stayed there. Petit Louis' face was not pleasant to see when Gaby turned hers the other way and studiously kept it there. Life is a very big adventure indeed when you are an Apache of say eighteen years and you live in Belleville but Petit Louis found there was something wanting in it.

All good Panthers had a girl, Petit Louis had not. There was, for instance, Phillipe le Goujon, whose sweetheart was Marcelle "la Grande". Marcelle often looked at Petit Louis and she was not always dancing with him when she looked. Phillipe le Goujon gave Marcelle several reminders not to look too often. Marcelle said she wouldn't, and she didn't, until Petit Louis gave her a pair of shoes with high red heels. Then she looked very hard, and would not have minded very much if the Goujon had been sent away for a quiet vacation in a French prison.

The Goujon had the same idea about Petit Louis and he planned a man's size burglary in which Petit Louis was to play a leading role as an ex locksmith. All went well. Petit Louis looked after the till, the Goujon looked after Petit Louis. They came out, and the Goujon's leg tripped Petit Louis. As he fell the Goujon put his knife in Petit Louis' back. The magistrate said it was a bad case—one for as much punishment as the law would allow, and Petit Louis got it.

When he came out of prison it was time for him to do his military service, but not being used to discipline he did badly, and the authorities said there was nothing for it but to put him in the *Eat d'Aff*, otherwise known as the African Battalion. Petit Louis did not like the idea of going to Morocco so he made his way to the Gare du Nord where he found a train bound for Belgium, and he took a joy ride there hanging on beneath a carriage.

In Belgium Petit Louis worked and worked rather hard. He had thought things over and decided that if he ever wanted to have the right to buy red heeled shoes for Gaby, he would have to go back and "change at the junction", which was his way of intimating that he meant to turn over a new leaf and be a good boy. Then came the war, and then—then the Boches were burning and sacking Belgium cities, slaughtering young children and women and spreading the propaganda of German culture. Petit Louis thought there must be something wrong. They were worse than Apaches, so he went out to try and discover what happened to deserters when they gave themselves up and as some French

gentlemen had already met in Paris and issued an Order in Council which answered this very question. Petit Louis returned to Paris.

He reported himself, listened to what the colonel had to say before going to be fitted for a new uniform and then behold Petit Louis transformed into a *frou frou* or *fantassin* or whatever you like to call him. But whatever he was he wanted to go out quickly and account for some of the spreaders of German culture. Wearing his uniform Petit Louis stepped out towards Belleville—a Belleville where there were no Black Panthers or Terrors of the Butte.

Gaby's factory was shut but she still worked. She was making things for the soldiers and suddenly she and Petit Louis came face to face. Petit Louis stopped, gave the military salute and held out his hand. Gaby blushed (yes in Belleville) and took it. This time she looked at him almost in the way Petit Louis wanted her to look.

The next scene is the Belgian frontier. The recurrent fought like devils. They marched all night and fought all day and one evening Petit Louis' company was surrounded and made prisoners. They were marched away under guard and one night they slept in a barn. The door was locked but Petit Louis had been a locksmith and when everyone else was asleep he took off his boots and went out and crept away leaving his boots as a souvenir.

The rest of the night he spent in a wood. He had no food. His feet were bleeding but his courage remained. He found a village where there was an old woman who had not fled. She fed him on bread and fruit. He rested a day then went on and after three more days he reached the British lines, where he told his story, showed his feet, and was given a pair of boots. He wanted to help so they showed him how to use a British rifle and let him assist.

No chance came of doing much until the division found itself fighting a superior force. A village was to be occupied. We shelled it with success but one house still harboured a number of Germans who kept up a sustained fire which was very annoying. There was only one

thing to be done, and that was to blow up the house. Many volunteers were forthcoming. Each set off crawling along with a charge of dynamite. Each attempt was stopped as the volunteer tried to cross the stretch of open ground.

Then Petit Louis wanted to go, and set off to the chorus of "Good luck!" to which he replied, "Oh yes all right"—new words recently added to his vocabulary.

He began to cross the open stretch. They saw him writhe and stop dead.

"They've copped the poor old Frenchie" said one of our men.

"No, they ain't begobs!" said another, as Petit Louis went forward again.

Well, he got there and the house was blown up. When they picked him up he was unconscious, which was not extraordinary considering that he had six bullets in him.

Behold Petit Louis once again in Paris in a hospital, with cheerful nurses tripping about. Skilful treatment bore fruit. He began to get better and could sit up for an hour a day but when he reached this stage he stopped and made no further progress. Doctors shook their heads, nurses shook theirs because the doctors did.

"Is there anything you would like?" asked one.

Petit Louis said, "Gaby."

And Gaby came. She looked a little war but Petit Louis knew nothing of the struggle she had had for existence. Her father had died and her mother could do very little towards keeping the tiny home together. Patriotic work was all very well but it did not bring in any money.

Every day Gaby came to the hospital, and each time she brought Petit Louis some small gift. The ex Apache mended rapidly. He asked Gaby to marry him and she promised to do so—after the war. Then Petit Louis was allowed to leave the hospital on convalescent leave before returning to the trenches. But he did not know where to go. His parents had vanished, leaving no trace behind.

He was doleful the afternoon when Gaby went to see

him and he told her the reason. He wanted to stay in Paris to be near her while he could. Afterwards the trenches—and who knows? Quickly Gaby made up her mind. They have impulsive natures in Belleville.

But thou art funny, thou, she smiled. Thou shalt come and stay with us in our flat.

Petit Louis opened his mouth to protest.

But see, foolish one, said Gaby, it is all arranged.

Does thy mother approve of this plan? asked the man.

Of course she does, answered Gaby, murmuring to herself. It is a white lie, and I go to confession to-morrow.

But still Petit Louis was not appeased.

And the sous? he asked, for of the little white pieces (francs) I have less than none.

Quickly Gaby countered with another lie.

And my pay? Shall it not suffice for us all?

Petit Louis was astonished.

Thy pay? he stammered. I thought thou wast not working just now?

But I have a good job since yesterday in a new factory (of a sort, I must go to confession to-morrow) where the money is good.

Yes, indeed, Gaby bent over and kissed Petit Louis flush on the mouth.

It is settled then? she asked.

Petit Louis babbled his thanks.

Au revoir then, my little one, I go now to prepare thy room, and I return to-morrow morning to fetch thee.

Walking quickly through the crowded streets Gaby found time for reflection. What was she to tell her parent? No money in the house and no work and now another mouth to feed.

Gaby found her mother in a bad temper.

I suppose thou hast been to the hospital once again, she sneered. When finishes then this nonsense with that good for nothing Petit Louis?

Gaby flared up. How darest thou say he is good for nothing? she stormed. He is good enough for me.

His past was wiped out on the battlefield. He is a man, my man my own."

Then she quietened down.

After a few moments silence she said "He leaves the hospital to-morrow."

"What is that to me?" replied the mother "The sooner he returns to his battlefield the better."

"He is coming to stay with us until he returns," said Gaby softly.

"What?" screamed the mother "He comes here? When I starve and moil and toil that we may exist, thou dares to speak of bringing thy lover here?"

"He is not my lover but my affianced husband," answered Gaby quietly, "and he comes here to-morrow morning."

"How do I know if he is thy lover or not?" raved the mother "We have heard of such things before to-day, here in Belleville. Is mademoiselle then a lady of means?" she went on, dropping into sarcasm "Of a truth one would say so, thou with thy airs and graces and who cannot get work to do to keep thy old mother. Oh yes a lady of means. A pity thou cannot make use of thy pretty face and figure even if thou cannot find work for thy fingers."

"What dost thou mean?" asked Gaby going very white "Dost thou mean—?"

"I mean we need the white pieces," replied her mother, "we need them yes for ourselves first of all, and we need yet more if thou art going to bring Petit Louis here. Thou must get them, I cannot."

"But maman, I am a good girl and always have been, thou knowest that."

The old woman shrugged her shoulders "Maybe," she answered laconically.

"*Eh bien*, as Gaby was about to make a reply, "*eh bien*, even if thou art a good girl as thou sayest, what of that? Thou art pretty and thou hast a comely figure are there not plenty of soldiers on leave eye and civilians too who know how to appreciate both? We need the white pieces," she continued angrily, "and it is for thou to see that we get them."

And with this Parthian shot she left the room Left by herself Gaby sank down to her knees

Dear God she exclaimed is this all that is left for me? My own mother tells me to go on to the streets For the white pieces must I then sell my body?

She remained for some time on her knees praying

Then she thought of Petit Louis He redeemed himself she murmured softly He was bad and now he is good Perhaps it will only be for a little while a few weeks before he goes back to the war And I will try hard and get some honest work indeed indeed I will And when he comes home from the war we will be married

Her face broke into a rapturous smile She rose from her knees For the rest of the evening she spoke no word to her mother who tried to find out what Gaby intended to do

The next morning Gaby set out for the hospital to fetch Petit Louis who was impatiently awaiting her coming Leaning on her arm the man hobbled along towards the girl's home He refused all offers of a conveyance for which Gaby was devoutly thankful as she had but a few sous in her purse

All of a sudden Petit Louis said I suppose thou hast obtained the morning off from thy factory to come and fetch me?

Gaby blushed then went white but the man did not notice

Er—yes I have she made answer

Then remembering what she intended to do she continued I am working in a factory where they make munitions I shall not be working any more in the mornings I am going on a late shift I start about five in the afternoon and work until midnight Yes

Petit Louis was satisfied He had been brought up in surroundings where all honest young women worked and those who did not well they gathered the little white pieces along the exterior boulevards He knew their type well They wore no hats but their hair was elaborately dressed They wore high heel'd boots and short skirts which clung tightly to their figures And every one of them wore a little apron It was like a

uniform Petit Louis, who remembered these *gensseries* from the time he was a member of the "Black Panthers" thought of them in terms of pity. They were utterly different he thought from the young woman by his side.

Arrived at the tiny flat Petit Louis did his best to make himself agreeable to Gaby's mother, who returned surly answers to his remarks. It was not a very jolly meal that they sat down to but Petit Louis just out of hospital did his best to keep them in good spirits.

After lunch the mother beckoned Gaby out of the room.

"Is it understood," she asked in low tones, "thou must obtain the white pieces or thy lover goes to-morrow?"

Gaby bent her head. "It is understood. I charge myself with the getting of them."

"It is well," replied the mother. "Thou art a good girl." And with a smile and a pat on the shoulder she left her daughter.

Gaby shuddered. For three or four hours she was gay and merry with Petit Louis. Then, as the hour of five approached she became quiet and only replied absently to Petit Louis' raillery. Presently she excused herself and went to her room. Only the All Knowing One and herself knew the mental torture she went through.

She returned to Petit Louis and said simply, "I go now to my work. Thou wilt be in bed and asleep when I return. To-night I get my pay, and to-morrow I will get thee some cigarettes. Good night my little one. And she kissed him softly on the forehead."

Her mother was sitting up when she returned, shortly before midnight. Her smile asked a question. For answer Gaby slipped a few francs into her mother's hand and went to bed.

The next morning, true to her promise, she went out and purchased some cigarettes and a cigar, which she gave with a cheery greeting to Petit Louis soon after he bobbed into the sitting room. Petit Louis was not yet strong enough to go walking so in the mornings Gaby sat and talked with him while her mother went out and did the marketing.

The man remarked that the mother's temper had

and the rumour spread that she had abandoned the streets for the cafes. It was true a *gongesse* passing a café at the corner of the Place Pigalle had seen her going in. She was well dressed it was said.

* * * * *

The war brought many foreigners to Paris. From all countries they came from North and South America from the East and from the West. While men fought there was money to be made, and the neutrals thought they were entitled to their share of the plunder. Among the foreigners was a young South American tall and handsome with plenty of money. In the daytime he amassed more and in the night time he did his best to spend it as far as the wartime distractions in Paris would allow.

He had not known Paris before the war but he had heard of Montmartre and one night made up his mind to see how it looked in wartime. He strolled from café to café and was about to go home feeling rather bored when chance led his footsteps to the café at the corner of the Place Pigalle. There were plenty of women there women with men women drinking and talking with other women and one woman sitting alone.

She is strikingly beautiful thought the young man. He called the waiter. Please ask that girl over there to come and sit at my table he said.

The waiter shook his head. No he said that is Gaby la Rouge and if anyone wants to talk to her he must tackle her himself.

Nothing loth the young man walked over to her table and with a bow and a smile asked if he might sit down. She assented.

They tell me you are called Gaby la Rouge said the young man.

Her brows contracted. Who said that? she snapped.

Well it was the waiter replied the man.

Oh it is true replied the girl. The man tried to make himself welcome but Gaby la Rouge only answered in monosyllables. Presently she looked him straight in the face and asked bluntly

"Are you rich?"

Somewhat taken aback the young man replied "Yes I am, why do you ask?"

"Because," replied Gaby, "if you are not, you are wasting your time talking to me. When you came in I had just made up my mind to chuck this life and become a *foule de luxe*. Are you a bird fancier?" she asked cynically.

The South American was accustomed to making up his mind quickly. "Yes, I am," he answered. Calling for the waiter he paid, and the couple left the café followed by the envious glances of the other women.

"I warn you," said Gaby one day to her lover "I shall ruin you and then I shall leave you."

"Are you not happy with me?" asked the young man, distressed.

"I shall never be happy," replied Gaby la Rouge. "I was not made for happiness. I was made for revenge."

The war ended, and Petit Louis returned to Paris and soon found work as a locksmith. He was a taciturn man, so his fellow workmen said. He spoke little, never drank and was never seen to speak to a woman.

The end of the war also brought prosperity to Gaby's lover. He had made money in wartime, but he was fast making a fortune soon after peace was signed. He installed Gaby in a private house near the Bois. She had two motor cars, a rope of pearls which would have made a queen envious, and she was one of the best customers the Rue de la Paix ever knew. She became legendary. People stopped talking when she entered a restaurant.

"That's Gaby, you know, Gaby la Rouge, they say . . ." And the tongues went on wagging as she trailed through the restaurant leaving behind her a host of bowing waiters and *maitres d'hôtels*.

Her picture appeared in the first post-war salon. Paragraphs about Gaby la Rouge were scattered through the pages of the gossip papers. People compared her to Cora Pearl and other famous courtesans. The South American basked in her reflected glory, but when he

asked Gaby if she were content she shook her head savagely

Paris gradually assumed its normal appearance. The world and his wife both official and unofficial went crazy about dancing. In all the fashionable dancing places Gaby la Rouge appeared and created a furore. She danced with remarkable abandon people said. She overheard a man remark. Gaby la Rouge dances like they do in the *bals mûsettes*. Gaby was seen to smile. And she smiled so rarely.

After the dance she said to her lover. Listen *mon ami* I have a whim. Let us leave here now and go to one of the *bals musettes*.

What dressed as we are? We shall be robbed replied the man.

Nonsense answered Gaby they will not touch me they know Gaby la Rouge and you will be safe with me. Come.

Accustomed to instantly comply with all her whims the young man did as he was bid. It was Gaby herself who gave the direction to the chauffeur who was too well trained to show surprise. Away they sped past the Opera then along the Rue Lafayette. The streets were deserted.

Where are we going? asked the man. Belleville answered Gaby la Rouge and she spoke the one word as exiles speak of the home from which they have been long absent. When on the outskirts of Belleville Gaby had to give more concise directions to the chauffeur. Presently she told him to stop.

We will go on foot from here she said. They walked toward a house which bore an illuminated sign.

Bal Musette. The man paid the price of admission and they entered a stuffy room crowded with men and women dancing to the strains of a concertina. That was all but such dancing! The man had never seen anything like it.

Why they are Apaches he said.

No replied Gaby la Rouge they are men.

Closely enlaced the couples moved round and round to the strains of the concertina. People looked curiously

If you don't—— as the young man was about to protest you will never see me again If all goes well you will never see me again anyhow she murmured to herself Gaby called the woman to her

Do you see this pearl necklace this dress everything I have on? Well they are all yours on one condition

Name it replied the woman curiously

That you change clothes with me here and now was the answer

The woman was too surprised to make any coherent reply but motioned the way towards a room where the change was effected

Stay here until I come to fetch you said Gaby la Rouge and went into the *bal* dressed in the short tight skirts which are so fashionable on the outer boulevards She saw Petit Louis and la Grande Marcelle sitting together The man looked unhappy she thought Outwardly calm but inwardly quaking Gaby walked up to the couple and said to Marcelle

I think I saw Philippe le Goujon looking for you

Old customs die hard in Belleville and without a word la Grande Marcelle jumped up and sprang away Gaby turned to look after her Then she heard a faint whisper

Gaby my Gaby is it thee? They told me oh so much I searched for thee everywhere and now now——

Now what? asked Gaby

Now I know all all all I tell thee spoke Petit Louis

I know now how selfish and blind I was and how I wronged thee

Dost thou forgive me then? asked Gaby

It is not I who shall forgive thee but I who shall ask thee for forgiveness said Petit Louis his eyes brimming over with tears of happiness Am I forgiven?

For reply Gaby flung her arms round Petit Louis and buried her face on his shoulder

* * * * *

As they left the *mairie* after the wedding Gaby suddenly stopped and said to her husband I wonder what became of that girl who had my clothes?

What clothes? asked Petit Louis surprised

I don't remember answered Gaby

at the man and woman, the woman in a brilliant evening dress, with magnificent jewellery

Presently a murmur arose 'Why, it's Gaby Gaby la Rouge has come back to us' Then a woman came towards Gaby

'*Eh bien*' she said insolently, "have you come back here to crow over us Well I for one would not change with you"

'But I would with you,' Gaby answered quickly The woman saw that Gaby la Rouge spoke the truth Her eyes were filled with tears

"Do you mean to say you would give up all you have and come back to this?" indicating the ball room with a sweep of her hand

I don't want to come back to this Gaby made answer, 'although it means to me the happiest days of my life but if I came back now it could never be the same.'

The woman was incredulous But seeking to hold the famous Gaby la Rouge in conversation she said "Do you remember Marcelle la Grande Marcelle?"

"Well as Gaby nodded assent 'they say she is about to take up with that old flame of yours You remember Petit Louis?' Gaby staggered as if she had been struck

'Well what of him?' she asked

'He has been here the last three nights she said, 'dancing with the Grande Marcelle They say he is doing well working hard but it is only since three nights ago that he has shown his face

"Is he here to-night?" Gaby asked eagerly

'I will look if you like' answered the woman and sped away

I have found him she announced when she returned in a few minutes He is over there talking to Marcelle Look, they are just going to dance'

Gaby saw Petit Louis and la Grande Marcelle pass but neither of them recognised her Once again in her life she made up her mind quickly They have impulsive temperaments in Belleville you will remember Turning to her lover and speaking quickly, she said

"Listen Go away at once and leave me here alone

If you don't—" as the young man was about to protest, "you will never see me again" "If all goes well you will never see me again, anyhow," she murmured to herself Gaby called the woman to her

"Do you see this pearl necklace, this dress, everything I have on? Well, they are all yours on one condition"

"Name it," replied the woman curiously

"That you change clothes with me here and now," was the answer

The woman was too surprised to make any coherent reply, but motioned the way towards a room where the change was effected.

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"I think I saw Philippe le Goujon looking for you"

Old customs die hard in Belleville and without a word la Grande Marcelle jumped up and sprang away Gaby turned to look after her Then she heard a faint whisper,

"Gaby my Gaby, is it thee? They told me, oh so much I searched for thee everywhere, and now, now—"

"Now what?" asked Gaby

"Now I know all, all, all I tell thee," spoke Petit Louis "I know now how selfish and blind I was and how I wronged thee"

"Dost thou forgive me, then?" asked Gaby

"It is not I who shall forgive thee, but I who shall ask thee for forgiveness," said Petit Louis, his eyes brimming over with tears of happiness "Am I forgiven?"

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As they left the *mairie* after the wedding Gaby suddenly stopped and said to her husband "I wonder what became of that girl who had my clothes?"

"What clothes?" asked Petit Louis, surprised

"I don't remember," answered Gaby

CHAPTER XII

SPIES IN THE UNDERWORLD

THE reading public, I think, has had a surfeit of spy stories. The late war was naturally responsible for a bumper crop, some supposed to be true, some frankly fiction, many of the former could very well take their place in the second category.

I have always admired Mr. William Le Queux for the beautiful varnish he places over the rougher parts of his tales of espionage and thereby adds verisimilitude to what might be otherwise "bald and uninteresting narratives" as Pooh-Bah said. Would that I could tell tales of beautiful women spies, who sit in luxuriously fitted rooms and with a cigarette a cynical smile and a slight foreign accent, send cold shivers down the spines of faithful readers. But when I began to write this book I promised myself that I would stick to facts. Therefore I approach the task of writing about espionage in the Underworld of Paris with some diffidence.

Of course it is well known to the Secret Services of the world that Paris was the clearing-house of all the men and women employed in espionage and counter-espionage. Brussels was another place where the secrets of nations were dealt in on a large scale, but sooner or later Paris was a rendezvous of the spies.

When the war came to an end and the whole world was full of beautiful thoughts it looked as if the spy's occupation, like Othello's might be gone. But very recently the German Reichstag voted a Secret Service budget which is equivalent to the pre-war figure. Other nations including England, America and France have also placed ample funds on one side for the purposes of espionage and counter-espionage so Paris will undoubtedly once again rank as the clearing house.

During the war, my journalistic duties as special corre-

spondent of the *Daily Express* took me into several neutral countries, where I soon discovered that espionage had been reduced to the finest of arts. In one country, Spain I came into the closest relations with enemy spies, and also with our own Intelligence people. No words of mine can add anything to the glory of our Service. It was materialised out of practically nothing, but rapidly became the finest in the world. I propose to tell something of espionage in Spain, although, strictly speaking, it has nothing to do with the Underworld of Paris. Nevertheless, many of the people employed by the enemy in Spain and Switzerland were quite well known figures in the Underworld of the French capital.

I should warn readers that if they think they are going to be thrilled they had better skip this chapter. It contains no thrills, just plain, unvarnished facts.

My first adventure—a rather banal one, but typical of what was to come—happened before I had been more than an hour on Spanish territory. It was in 1917. The train had made its customary stop at Hendaye, and had then run across the frontier to Irun, where there was another stop. Very soon after the journey was resumed a venerable looking old gentleman came into my carriage, where I sat alone. He took a seat in the corner opposite, scattered his small baggage over the cushions, and then addressed me in Spanish—a language which I speak very imperfectly. I replied in French that I did not speak Spanish. The venerable señor then continued his conversation in French—merely empty phrases. Then undoubtedly detecting my British accent, he commenced to speak English which he spoke perfectly.

He was a Russian business man, so he said, going to Madrid for his personal affairs. Was I going to Madrid? I replied that I was. Government mission? No. He gave me a knowing look and exclaimed "Oh, of course not." Then he told me that passport regulations had changed within the last twenty-four hours. I had heard nothing of it and did not believe it, but I told the man that I was aware of it.

"Show me your passport," he said, "and I will tell you in a moment if it is all right." I said my passport

was locked up in my bag, although at the moment it was reposing in my pocket. Conversation languished for a time. Then my companion said "I've a sleeping compartment, would you like to share it?" I replied that I preferred to sit up all night in the carriage as it was so hot. At Miranda the "Russian" said he had changed his mind and would go to Barcelona. Three days later I saw him in my hotel at Madrid.

Just before leaving Paris I had been warned by my friend, Will Irwin, the American author, who had recently returned from Spain never to let my passport out of my possession as British and American passports were very much sought after by enemy agents in Spain. They were sent to Antwerp, where there was the notorious espionage school and the passports were altered and used by spies.

The hotel where I stayed in Madrid was a sort of Tom Tiddler's ground. Members of the British and French Embassies were staying there, and also a number of Germans and Austrians. Very curious things used to happen. Colonel T——, the head of the British counter-espionage service in Spain, told me how one night when he arrived there from Gibraltar and went to bed dead tired, he was prevented from sleeping by a noise in an adjoining room. He telephoned down to the reception office and asked the clerk to come upstairs. He inquired as to who had the room adjoining and was told by the clerk that it had been booked by a man who had arrived that night from Gibraltar. The Colonel was well known in the hotel, and insisted that the clerk should go with him and immediately open with his pass key the door of the adjoining room. This was done suddenly and standing on the bedrail with a pocket tool chest in one hand, was a young man engaged in boring a hole in the wall. On the bed lay a microphone set.

Some quaint experiences also happened to me when in Madrid on this occasion. Whenever I left my bedroom and returned again, I found every scrap of torn-up paper had vanished from the waste paper basket, and the top sheet of the blotting pad was always fresh. A very perfectly organised hotel service! But one must re-

member that whereas there were only eight thousand Germans in Spain before the war there were eighty thousand there during hostilities most of them having come from the South American states. Many of these men and women too were penniless but their respective embassies—German and Austrian—looked after them.

Many were employed in their national espionage service. One of them a woman was exceedingly pretty. She was from Vienna but married to an Englishman. In Madrid she passed herself off as a Dane. She spoke English, French and German fluently. This woman who was well known to our Intelligence Service had a curious job. Every evening at the same time she made her appearance in the grill room café of the Palace Hotel and her instructions were to make herself attractive to any English, American or Frenchmen. She did her job well enough, did this pretty lady of the Underworld, but as every English, American or Frenchman was warned who she was she did not score very heavily for the Austrian Secret Service.

One afternoon I was writing private letters to friends in the writing room of the Palace Hotel. I completed my correspondence and went out of the room and into the vestibule to buy some stamps. On my way I suddenly remembered I had left my little pocket address book on the table in the writing room. I returned there hurriedly and found a man carefully tearing off the blotting paper I had used. The Huns were exceedingly thorough but I think on this occasion I was more embarrassed than the spy. He was quite well known to me. He and his brother both German dentists were on the Black Book of the British and French Intelligence Service.

It was on another trip to Spain when I was at San Sebastian that I came in close touch with our Naval Intelligence. I have not a complete record of the number of German submarines using Spanish villages for bases and which were sunk thanks to the brains and energies of our Naval Intelligence but I know there were several and I had the good fortune to be present on the occasion when one German super-submarine made its last trip—to the bottom. This particular sub had long been re-

victualled from a Spanish tug, which put to sea as often as she was instructed by a German agent in San Sebastian. Our people tried their best to buy off the captain of the tug, but there was nothing doing. The captain was quite open to make a little extra money, but he refused to carry a sack which our people were very anxious he should carry.

He said he could not do this because a German agent accompanied him on nearly every journey, and he checked the number of sacks which were passed over the side to the waiting submarine.

After some money had changed hands the captain agreed to substitute a sack which our people provided for one provided by the Germans. These sacks contained provisions. The captain was told that our substitute sack would only contain a leg of mutton and some turnips.

This was quite true. It did, but we forgot to tell the captain that the leg of mutton and the turnips were exceedingly indigestible. They contained time bombs filled with T.N.T.!

One other occasion I remember particularly well. On a lonely hill not very far from San Sebastian, the Germans had erected a small wireless station for the purpose of communicating with their submarines. We had informed the Governor of the Province but he would not take any steps to have it removed. The only thing to be done was to remove it ourselves.

One dark night a member of the Naval Intelligence together with another Englishman who had no right at all to be there went out for a ride on a car. The car stopped about five hundred yards away from the hill. Then the two men alighted and filled two women's stockings with sand—a curious thing to do on a dark and windy night—but these stockings were most useful, for when crawling on all fours up the hill the solitary young Hun who was minding the wireless was suddenly sandbagged—a most reprehensible thing to do I admit. And the wireless was dismantled and carried away and put in the car. I wonder if a certain Consul in Bilbao knew what a particular wooden case contained—a case left with him “to be called for”?

There are many tales I could tell of espionage and counter-espionage in Spain, but they have little or nothing to do with the Underworld of Paris, to which I must now return.

Although all kinds of Secret Service men and women are passing in and out of the Paris Underworld, the French counter-espionage people are very naturally on the lookout for agents of Germany. But they know perfectly well that even countries allied to France, such as England, Italy and Japan, have their spies constantly on the watch. Perhaps "spy" is too harsh a word to use, because much of the information which foreign powers wish to gather is purely of a political nature. Even America is not exempt from the wish to learn France's innermost thoughts.

Despite all the ink which has been spilt to prove the contrary, America knows very well that Japan is as great a danger to her as Germany was to France. During the period I have been writing this book, America has learnt that Japan has been buying aeroplanes from France. This news has been published in American newspapers, but long long before the information was known to the public, the State Department at Washington was fully aware of it. The news came to the American newspapers through a young American journalist who specialised in information connected with flying. His story was in the nature of a "scoop" and like many newspaper "scoops," it was learned by accident. But the representatives of the State Department at Washington gathered their information (which was extraordinarily detailed) through long and painstaking research.

The American Secret Service working in Europe dates from the war, and it is extraordinarily active. When the United States entered the war they enlisted men for their Secret Service, just as other nations enlisted men for their artillery or infantry. These men had to possess two qualifications, youth, and a knowledge of at least one foreign language. Many of the members of their Secret Service are of foreign birth, and are either men who have become naturalised or who were born in America of foreign parents.

They were sent to France and drafted into a special

school, which during the war was at Chaumont--the American General Headquarters. Here the young men were trained for various departments of the Secret Service, both espionage and counter-espionage. The Intelligence Service, which comprised both these aforementioned branches, was known as G-2. With an imagination that cannot be too highly praised, the Americans made great use of trained journalists; gave them commissions and placed them at the heads of departments. Many of the American Secret Service men did duty in Paris but they were also to be found on the Swiss, Italian and Belgian frontiers. When the war came to an end numerous members of the Service were sent into Germany, where they did excellent work. Many of the men, of course, went home, but a great many remained in France, some of them staying on with their organization. It was through one of these men that Washington learned of the purchase by Japan of the French aeroplanes.

It is the duty of all Secret Service men to keep in close touch with the inhabitants of the Underworld which is a difficult and often dangerous proceeding. In this particular case it meant days and nights spent in low haunts. A woman, who had been the sweetheart of a French engineer employed in a well known aeroplane factory, had been discarded by her lover, who had fallen in love with another girl. The forsaken woman swore to be revenged. She was for ever telling the story of her wrongs. One woman to whom she told her story repeated it to a young member of the American Secret Service. At first he paid no attention, being slightly bored with this tittle-tattle of women, but a stray reference to the aeroplane works where the man worked awoke his interest.

'He told Marie-Louise he might be going to Japan,' said her friend, never dreaming of the importance of her remark. Japan! Aeroplanes! mused the young American. Then, without betraying his interest, he said he would like to have a word with the young woman. A meeting was arranged, but the girl could not give any information of importance, although she was perfectly willing to do so. Link by link the evidence was collected.

Several men were put on to the trail of evidence, which led to Marseilles among other places. The evidence was pieced together and revised. A full report was sent to Washington, and one move in the game of international chess was countered, although not checkmated.

During the war there were many instances of the curious mentality of the Germans—a mentality which lost them the war. Their spies, brave men no doubt, made excursions into Paris but they were caught before they ever managed to obtain any information. Quite early in the war (in fact, it was immediately after the Battle of the Marne) a detective from the Prefecture came to see me to inquire about a British officer who had been convicted of espionage in Germany and sentenced to a term of imprisonment in a fortress. He was released in 1914. This man, who was a solicitor and a Territorial officer, was killed in the early fighting. The French detective wanted me to tell him all I knew of the story, which I accordingly did. Afterwards I invited him to tell me why the information was required. This was his story.

A motor car containing three British officers had been observed driving round Paris. The back of the car was full of luggage. The three men had stopped at a leading hotel in the Place Vendôme where they had registered. The name given by one of them was the same name and rank as the man who had been sentenced as a spy. Even his luggage bore his name and rank. The car and occupants were found, and the men were arrested. All spoke English fluently, and after a very short conversation confessed they were Germans.

It was one of the most stupid things the enemy ever did, and I think it was only equalled for stupidity by another German who was arrested very shortly after the previous occurrence in the bar of the Grand Hotel. He wore the uniform of a British officer on active service and nobody would have given him a second glance but he drank too many whiskies and sodas and became loquacious and talked foolishly, thus causing his own undoing.

Not many weeks after this a woman walking along the Boulevard des Italiens remarked a French officer

return the salute of a private, and she thought he did so in rather an awkward manner. She spoke to a policeman, who laughed at her. She followed the officer and kept telling policemen, who refused to take any notice. She followed the man as far as the Boulevard Sebastopol, where he took a seat outside a café. The woman then spoke to a man, who insisted that a policeman should ask the officer to show his papers. The officer did so, quite calmly and politely, but the woman was not satisfied. A crowd began to collect, and there was a discussion. This was just what the woman wanted. The policeman invited everyone to come to the police station, and they went, officer and all. The officer never left, or rather he did leave, but it was in a prison van—another German.

A Portuguese, who was shot during the war after being court-martialled, was a victim of a woman of the Paris Underworld. This man met the woman during the war and fell violently in love with her. His people were fairly rich and well connected, but he ceased his studies in Paris to be with his mistress. He had plenty of money at the beginning, all of which he lavished on the woman. When he had no more the woman said she intended to leave him unless he obtained some.

"Tell me how I may obtain some money, and I will get it," said the man. The woman told him to get in touch with the Germans. "You are neutral," she said, "and you can easily get a visa to go to Switzerland. Go to Zurich, where there are plenty of Germans; find out who their espionage people are and tell them you have an important military secret to sell." "But I know no military secrets," cried the man piteously. The woman stamped her foot and called him "fool." "No matter," she exclaimed, "get some money from the Germans and come back. They will give you some to return to Paris." The Portuguese did as he was bid. He obtained his visa and went to Zurich, where he told the German espionage people that he had an important military secret to sell, but that the papers were in Paris. The Germans gave him money and told him to go and come back.

He returned to the woman with a roll of banknotes.

They were soon gone and then she insisted that he should return to Zurich and obtain some more money. He demurred but she told him: "If you do not I shall leave you to-night for a man who will not begrudge me money."

The poor fool returned to Zurich where he again met the Germans. This time they were angry with him, and he had great difficulty in obtaining any more money, but he protested that it cost him much money to obtain the famous military secret. Eventually they gave him money but said to him: "If you are not back here within one month and if you do not then produce the military secret of which you have spoken then beware for we shall denounce you to the French authorities."

The Portuguese hurried back to his mistress and placed the money at her feet. At the same time he told her what had passed between the Germans and himself. The woman became afraid. "If he is denounced," she said to herself, "I may be implicated." She accordingly denounced the man herself. He was tried and shot at Vincennes. Then the woman sold her memoirs to a well known Paris daily newspaper!

The threat to denounce the Portuguese was not an idle one for several spies were denounced to the French by the Germans after they had made use of them. One man who was in the employ of the Germans made several trips to Switzerland and on the occasion of one visit was taxed by the Germans with having been guilty of treachery. They said he had been in touch with the Ministry of the Interior. The man emphatically denied the allegation. Then the German agent with a smile opened a drawer and said to the spy: "Look at this." What he looked at was a snapshot of himself taken as he was coming out of the gates of the Ministry of the Interior.

The history of Bolo Pasha is almost too recent to bear repetition but as I was present every day during his trial in Paris I can throw some new light on this strange adventurer who bluffed French Germans and Americans alike.

Bolo was nothing but a vulgar adventurer of the Underworld who in his earlier days had preyed on women. He came of a respectable but humble family and his

only brother, who died early in 1921, was a priest. I remember this poor man giving evidence at the trial. He wept bitterly and pleaded hard for his brother.

Bolo Pasha came to the notice of the police when still quite a young man. He ran away with the serving girl of a café in the provinces and left her stranded. He then had some business relations with a man, whom he swindled, and decamped with this man's wife. The woman, who went blind eventually, returned to her husband, and was another pathetic witness at the famous trial.

Bolo, who lived by his wits for years, made the acquaintance of a woman (a widow I believe) whom he married. This woman had considerable means and it was her money which purchased the estate at Biarritz. But Bolo had a crooked streak in him and although he possessed, through his wife, an ample supply of money, yet he began to intrigue in the lower depths of French politics with the object of making more money. The war gave him the opportunity for which he was seeking, and although he had nothing to sell, yet he managed to persuade the German agents in America that he could buy the Paris newspaper the *Journal*, which would then be used for German propaganda in France.

The *Journal* at that time was the property of a Senator who had begun life as a bottle washer in a Paris restaurant. This man, who possessed brains above the average, was afterwards court-martialled but discharged. The Senator and Bolo and an ex Prime Minister (Caillaux), were all intriguing, and Bolo "bluffed" them both. He went to America where he also "bluffed" the German agents and some Americans whom he met in New York including one of the leading newspaper magnates in the *United States*—another man who has reputation for acuteness. They all fell victims to Bolo's wiles.

Bolo had established relations with some of the best known demi-mondaines in Paris and through them got into touch with various people in Switzerland and Spain. Both these countries he visited several times during the war, and in Switzerland we hear of him negotiating

with the ex-Khedive of Egypt, from who he obtained the title of "Pasha." He also intrigued with the Turks, and these people, too, he succeeded in "bluffing." His negotiations for the purchase of the *Journal* never came to anything, but he was arrested, tried and shot, no doubt to "encourage the others," as they say in French.

Bolo did not cut a very brave figure in the dock. He would sit there with his head on one side with a nervous smile on his face, listening intently while his lawyer battled for his life. Next to the dock there were some seats for privileged members of the public. Every day while the trial lasted there was a woman sitting in a seat next to the barrier which separated the public seats from the dock. She was not a young woman neither was she handsome indeed she had one of the most evil faces I have ever seen. She was the mystery woman of the case. Her eyes never left Bolo's face. It was stated that she was not known to the prisoner, but she sent him letters every day, and when the trial was drawing to a close, she bombarded the prisoner with fetiches "guaranteed" to preserve him from the death sentence.

When he was found guilty and sentenced to meet a firing squad at Vincennes, there occurred the only dramatic moment of the trial. The prisoner was not brought into the court to hear the verdict. The corridors of the Palais de Justice were packed tight with humanity waiting to hear the result of the trial. It was seven o'clock and thousands of men and women on their way home from work were waiting in the streets adjoining the Court. The President of the Court Martial announced the verdict. Not ten seconds after the dread words had fallen from his lips, there arose a murmur from the corridors. The word had been passed from mouth to mouth—"guilty." Then arose terrible cries from the streets, an awful sound which came through the windows of the court and drowned the judge's remarks. It was like the shouting of a well trained stage crowd heard "off." "*A mort Bolo,*" they screamed. "Death to the traitor!"

Closely connected with Bolo was Pierre Lenoir, the

son of the man who in his lifetime was an important personage in the Paris office of the *Journal* Lenoir was a member of the gilded youth of the French capital. His mistresses were legion, and included women of the Underworld and the half-world.

Lenoir was addicted to drugs. He was a tall, pale-faced young man, with piercing dark eyes set in circles of black. He was adored by his mother, who was completely under the thumb of the son. Some of the letters from the son to the mother were read at Lenoir's trial, and more sensational documents have seldom been made public in a court of law. In one letter Pierre cynically discussed the plan of getting rid of one of his mistresses with the aid of poison.

The charge against Lenoir was one of "intelligence with the enemy" in other words espionage, but it cannot be said that Lenoir himself showed much intelligence in his dealings with the enemy. Like Bolo and many others Lenoir went to Switzerland on several occasions and got into touch with the Germans. He, too, boasted of his ability to secure the *Journal* for nefarious purposes, but unlike Bolo, Lenoir had some grounds for making his boast, and if the French Intelligence Department had not taken a hand in the game, it is more than likely that the *Journal* would have passed into the hands of the enemy.

Lenoir also made a pitiable figure in the dock. Drugs had wrecked his health, and he shook and trembled like an old man. Witnesses from the Underworld were called to the witness stand, and spoke against him, piling up the accusations until the military judges found him guilty and sentenced him to death.

In prison while awaiting his execution Lenoir obtained permission to have injections of morphia—under medical supervision, of course. The morning fixed for his execution dawned, but as in a sensational novel, there was an eleventh hour reprieve. Lenoir had stated, through his lawyer, that he had important revelations to make, and justice was disposed to hear him. However, when invited to make a statement, Lenoir babbled incoherently, and the Minister of the Interior, after the President of

the Republic had rejected an appeal for clemency, saw no reason to interfere with the execution of the sentence.

As other traitors, Lenoir was to be shot in the ditch at Vincennes, but when the second date of fate dawned, he was in a state of utter collapse and had to be carried to the stake, and even then his legs refused to support him. A chair was fetched from the prison and Lenoir was seated on it, his eyes blindfolded, and in this position he was shot by a firing squad.

In another part of this book I have referred to the "Bonnet Rouge" gang—a group of hirelings of unscrupulous politicians who were a disgrace to the profession of journalism. Some of them were shot and others sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. Several of them were denizens of the Paris Underworld and long, long before the "Bonnet Rouge" was ever established, they had come under the notice of the police for crimes committed, they were all petty crimes, such as one finds in this remarkable Underworld of which I am writing. But espionage attracted them as soon as they saw there was money in it and they paid the penalty of those who tried to stab France in the back when she was at death grips with Germany.

One has to hark back to the Dreyfus case for evidence of the first instance of organised espionage and counter-espionage of our time. Then it was seen that France was not altogether unprepared for the war of revenge, and Germany too was digging her tentacles into France with the object of destroying her as soon as the opportunity presented itself. I do not intend to deal with the Dreyfus case here, but have merely mentioned it in passing.

From 1904 onwards German espionage in France developed on broad lines. Women have played a considerable part in espionage against France, chiefly acting as agents for Germany. Several of these women I came across during the war, and I regret to state that two of them were Englishwomen.

The first woman spy to be caught gave her name as Mrs Booth. In November, 1914, she was sentenced to two years imprisonment, with a fine of a thousand francs.

"Mrs. Booth" to call her by the name she gave, was a clever and accomplished woman. She spoke fluent English and dressed as a Red Cross nurse. She met British wounded at the Gare du Nord. She invited British officers to dine with her and while they were under the influence of her charm and hospitality, she tried to wheedle military information out of them. In this way she sought information as to the position of the troops, their strength, reinforcements, and other things likely to be of use to the Germans.

She also visited hospitals, and she was overheard saying to the wounded "Why do you fight for France? It's no business of yours." She tried hard to discourage the men. This woman's card was shown to me by an officer who suspected her. It bore an Eastbourne address. Her real name was Juliette Zarlowska. She was the divorced wife of a German officer, and was of British and Russian descent. Several of the officers who were invited by her grew suspicious, and gave information to the police who finally set to work. The woman had a violent altercation with the concierge when she was arrested and put in gaol. "The Germans will be here in a fortnight," she screamed "and I'll have you shot."

The second English woman spy to be arrested was Selmar Gibbs. She was sixty-two when she fell into the hands of the police in March 1915. Mrs Gibbs was born in Hastings, but she had lived in Rennes for ten years, and was arrested at Perpignan. This woman first pretended to be a Greek, then a Belgian and subsequently Irish. She was found to be in correspondence with German agents in Spain. Her neighbours always thought she was slightly demented. Keeping cats was her hobby—she had twenty of them—and when one died she constructed a tomb which cost £8. It was subsequently proved that this eccentricity was merely a ruse.

It is almost in vain that I search my memory for an instance of a woman spy whose career was surrounded by romance. I only remember one case, and this poor girl was not a spy, although she was court-martialled on a charge of espionage. It was in May, 1915 that

I was present at a court-martial in Paris of Fraulein Susan Pommerich, aged thirty-six, a governess, and heard then the story of a German woman's love for a British officer, and how she sacrificed her liberty in order to see him.

Fraulein Pommerich was born in Dresden. She was a frail, pretty little woman, and entering the dock between two Municipal guards she answered the President's preliminary questions in a low voice speaking French with an English accent. When told that she might be seated, she put her handkerchief to her eyes and wept softly. It appeared that she had been governess in a family at Mitchelstown Ireland in 1906, and that she made the acquaintance of a captain in the British Army. The couple were very much in love with each other, and would have married but for the woman's nationality.

They parted, and Fraulein Pommerich came to Paris, became governess with a German family, and then joined a French family. At the outbreak of war the woman asked for a week's holiday saying she was going to London, but instead of doing so she went to Havre and then to Rouen in search of her old sweetheart. Unsuccessful in her quest, she went to Switzerland and in the meantime her employers received an anonymous telegram accusing her of espionage. The police were informed, and on her return to France she was arrested.

The principal evidence against her was a letter to the prisoner from a German officer, written since the beginning of hostilities asking her to go to Fribourg and give further information concerning "B of B", all expenses would be paid, said the German who gave details of how the reply was to be sent in order to disarm suspicion.

There was a dramatic scene in court when the woman told her story about the British officer. "I loved him," she said simply, "I shall always love him. It is true that I passed myself off as an Englishwoman. I look upon England as my country. I hate Germany." As she said this she struck the rail with her clenched fist. "I went to Rouen and Havre to try and find Captain — I could not bear the thought that he might be killed at the war and I never see him again. I would rather be

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receive the information in time to make much use of it before the Battle of the Somme, but the woman paid the penalty, as I have described elsewhere in this book.

Many women, French, Austrian and German, have played minor parts in espionage dramas. Some Montmartre cafés were the clearing houses of titbits of information picked up by the spies higher up. Those of my readers who knew the night cafés of Paris before the war need no telling that the bartenders there were inevitably Germans. Some of them passed as Englishmen, but the majority were acknowledged Huns. I do not say that all the men were spies, but I can affirm that they were all potentially in the service of Germany. None of them would have refused to do a service for the Fatherland and if there was money in it—so much the better.

As a matter of fact a great many of them were spies, indeed, the whole of the Underworld of Paris was dragged every now and again with a net. Sometimes the dragging was done by the French espionage service, sometimes by the Germans themselves in the hope of netting some small fish. Both sides seldom drew blank. There were many young women who were not averse to doing anything they could to add to their rather precarious livelihood.

A foreign spy, and not always a German, would frequent the night cafés on the watch for any woman who had friendly relations with a French officer. The man, who posed as a cosmopolitan amusing himself in Paris, would carefully drop ground bait in the shape of champagne suppers, excursions to the race courses, new dresses and hats, and anything else that might attract a "daughter of joy" to him. When the fish nibbled careful play was made with the line, and the fish was more likely than not hooked.

There is one café which still exists, which was a noted place for doings of this kind. The barman and several of the waiters were Germans, the frequenters were members of all nations. The professional dancers were English, French and Spanish. To the uninitiated there was nothing to distinguish this night café from its fellows, but to those who were behind the scenes there was always excitement to be found in watching the spy and the counter-

spy at work. Sometimes a comedy-drama would take weeks before it came to a climax, and sometimes the curtain was rung down on a tragedy.

More than one mysterious death was a nine days' wonder in Paris, and the authorities could have shed considerable light on these matters if they wished, but it so happened that they did not want too fierce a light to be turned on the mystery, and journalists who were at work on these stories were politely dissuaded from trying to penetrate the cloak of mystery which wrapped the tragedy.

A woman who was thought to be on the point of turning against the nation which was paying her a small retaining fee to report suspect spies to the police might be found dead. It has been known to happen.

CHAPTER XIII

A PAIR OF YELLOW GARTERS

"COME quickly quickly, Mlle Daisy is dead"

These words, uttered in French but with an English accent, startled the concierge who was sitting knitting in her loge. The house in the Rue des Martyrs had an unsavoury appearance one associated it with evil deeds. And here was a young Englishman saying that a tenant had been murdered. The concierge could not remember a murder in the house since it had been in her care but the police had had occasion to call many times. It was a furnished house that is to say one in which all the rooms and small flats were let by the month.

The concierge dropped her knitting and without undue haste waddled upstairs. The Englishman went on ahead, looking back impatiently for the woman to follow more quickly. The door of the tiny flat was open, there was just a bedroom, with an adjacent cabinet de toilette and a kitchen. The electric light in the bedroom was turned on.

On the floor was Mlle Daisy, nude except for a single garment, her head on her right arm, looking as if she were asleep.

But she was dead. The concierge soon satisfied herself as to this. She looked at the tall young Englishman whom she knew as a frequent visitor to the dead dancer. She looked at him without any emotion, and said "I must inform the police the police station is just round the corner. I shall be back in a few minutes. Will you wait here?"

Geoffrey Convent nodded. The woman went downstairs. Geoffrey waited a few moments then he too, went downstairs rather than remain alone with the dead body. He stood outside the concierge's loge until she returned. She was accompanied by a doctor, the portly

commisnaire de police and two very obvious plain clothes policemen. They told Geoffrey to go upstairs with them.

The concierge went, too. She told how the Englishman had rushed downstairs to notify her that Mlle. Daisy was dead. Then they asked Geoffrey to tell what he knew.

Geoffrey said the dead girl's name was Daisy Hatton. He had met her in a Montmartre café. She was English, he, too, was English, and they had struck up an acquaintance. He had had an appointment to meet her that afternoon at the Café de la Paix. He waited there some time, but as she did not come, he took a cab and went to her flat to see if anything was the matter. The door of the flat was ajar. He had knocked but obtained no answer, so he went in. The door of the bedroom was half open and the light was on. He knocked at the bedroom door, and then went in. He saw the girl on the floor, touched her and found she was cold. Then he ran downstairs and called the concierge.

That was all. While Geoffrey had been telling his story, the doctor had been examining the body. He turned to the commissaire and said, "It is impossible to know how mademoiselle met with her death."

The commissaire said some words rapidly in French to the two plain clothes men. They placed themselves one on either side of Geoffrey, and the commissaire motioned them to precede him downstairs. "Good Lord," said Geoffrey to himself, "I suppose I am under arrest." His knowledge of French was not good, but he was able to understand that his surmise was correct. He was taken to the police station and kept there some time. Then they sent him to the Santé prison in a cab.

Geoffrey asked that a message should be sent to his parents in England, and this was done. The next day his father arrived. Two days after that Geoffrey was charged with the wilful murder of Daisy Hatton.

The dead girl's body had been removed to the Morgue for a post-mortem examination, but the doctors were unable to discover the cause of her death; although they were sure she had been murdered. The police

showed much reticence over the affair, and word went out from a high authority to the newspapers to refrain from mentioning the matter in their columns.

But Geoffrey's father had friends in the Foreign Office in London, and through them the British Embassy in Paris set to work. Geoffrey and his father were astonished to learn that the police suspected the alleged murderer of being connected with the British Secret Service.

Geoffrey told his story over again, but was subjected to a very searching cross-examination. In the Long Vacation he had come over to Paris for a holiday, he had never been abroad before. The sights and delights of the Gay City soon began to pall, he said, and he did not want to be taken round by a guide. Therefore, he was very glad as he did not know a soul in Paris, to make the acquaintance of Daisy Hatton.

Geoffrey met her, he told the police, the first time he went to the Café of the Golden Bowl in Montmartre. He was alone, and as it was early there were few people in the room. He wanted to have supper, but decided to wait a little while. He noticed a pretty girl in earnest conversation with a tall and elegantly dressed Frenchman. Presently the Frenchman went away, and he noticed that the girl was in tears. He went to the bar and ordered a cocktail.

Geoffrey asked the barman whom the girl was, and was told that she was Daisy Hatton, an English dancing girl. "I wonder if she would have supper with me?" Geoffrey said to the barman, and the latter, with a grin, said, "Of course she will, if you ask her." Two weeks in Paris had not cured Geoffrey of his English shyness, so, being afraid to go up and speak to the girl, he scribbled an invitation on one of his cards and sent it across by a waiter.

"What happened then?" asked the examining magistrate, and Geoffrey unhesitatingly replied, "I asked her why she was crying, and if there was anything I could do to help her."

"What then?" snapped the magistrate.

"She told me that the young man's name was Vicomte de Ferneul, and that he had said something which was

true, but which nevertheless made her very miserable."

At the mention of the Frenchman's name, a man who had been attending the examination on behalf of the Quai d'Orsay, got up and whispered a few words in the magistrate's ear.

"That will be all for to-day," said the magistrate, and Geoffrey was removed to his cell.

The next afternoon, when he attended for his examination, Geoffrey was surprised to see the Vicomte in the room. The magistrate, pointing to Geoffrey, asked "Is this the man?"—and the Vicomte assented.

"Now continue your story," said the magistrate to Geoffrey.

The Englishman took up the threads from the previous day's hearing.

"Daisy's spirits seemed to revive during the supper and she kept me laughing with her chatter. She said she had come from London several years ago with a troupe of dancers. The other girls had continued the tour to various Continental cities but she had decided to remain in Paris. She had danced at several theatres, she told me the names but I cannot remember them. After supper I drove her home, left her at the door and promised to go and fetch her for a drive the next day. We went to the Bois. Daisy said she had an engagement for the evening, so could not have supper with me. She, however, said she would see me at the Café at about one o'clock."

"I did not know what to do with myself," continued Geoffrey, "so I went to the Café alone about ten-thirty. I had a drink at the bar, and Jack, the barman asked me how it was that I was alone. I told him and he said 'There is a pretty little girl over there by herself, and I am sure she would like to have supper with you.' 'Does she speak English?' I asked. Jack said she did, so I invited her to have supper with me."

"The girl told me her name was Vera. She spoke English very well, but not with a French accent."

"No, she is an Austrian," said the magistrate dryly.

Geoffrey thought for a moment, then he said "Isn't the barman an Austrian, too? He seemed to speak English with the same kind of accent as Vera."

"Your friend Jack is a German," answered the man who was representing the *Quai d'Orsay*.

Geoffrey was about to protest that Jack was not a friend of his, but remembering that he was a prisoner with a charge of murder hanging over his head, he decided to hold his peace.

The magistrate said "I am instructed to allow you out on bail. The British Embassy has guaranteed that you will remain in Paris at the disposition of justice. You will be here to-morrow at three o'clock."

That evening, as Geoffrey and his father were sitting down to their coffee and cigars in the hall of their hotel, the *Vicomte*, in faultless evening dress, strolled over to their table.

With a bow and speaking in English, he said "Will you allow me to sit at your table for a few minutes?"

Neither of the Englishmen liked to refuse, but they were not anxious to talk to the man whom they both suspected of being vaguely connected with the tragedy. Geoffrey's father mumbled his assent and the *Vicomte*, with a languid air settled himself in a chair. There was a moment's awkward silence before the *Vicomte* said

"Where did you buy those garters?"

Geoffrey blushed and looked confused. "I cannot pretend that I do not know what you mean," he replied, "but I assure you that I did not buy them."

"Anyhow, you gave them to Daisy, did you not?" asked the *Vicomte*.

"Yes," replied Geoffrey, "I gave them to her the last time I saw her in the *Café of the Golden Bowl*."

"The last time you saw her was not that the night before she died?" queried the *Vicomte*.

Geoffrey nodded his head. The *Vicomte*, with the same languid air, pursued his cross-examination.

"You gave them to her as a present, but yet you say you did not buy them. How was that?"

Geoffrey's father, who had hitherto taken no part in the conversation, now spoke. "*Vicomte*," he said, "with all due respect, I do not see what this matter has to do with you."

Before the Vicomte could reply, Geoffrey turned to his father and said "Father, I think I ought to speak. I have nothing to hide, and in truth, the awful happenings of the past few days, drove this very trivial matter out of my head."

"Well" he continued, "I will tell you I wanted to give Daisy a little present, a little souvenir of our friendship. I asked her what she would like, but she would not say. I pressed the matter on the next occasion when I met her, and she said (I thought jokingly) 'Give me a pair of garters.' I protested that this was not at all the sort of present I wanted to give her. I meant a ring or a brooch or something of that kind, but she insisted that I should give her a pair of garters or nothing at all. I well remember the poor girl saying 'I should love to see your face when you go into the shop and ask for a pair of garters, you poor boy, how you will blush and stammer, I feel sure.' The pair of garters became a kind of joke between us."

"Did anyone else in the Café know that you were going to give Daisy a pair of garters?" asked the Vicomte.

"Oh, yes," replied Geoffrey easily, "I think nearly everyone who goes there regularly knew about it. Jack, the barman, used to chaff me about it."

"But you have not yet told us how you bought them, if you did not buy them yourself," said the father.

"It was Vera who bought them for me," said Geoffrey.

At the mention of the girl's name, the Vicomte was heard to mutter "As I thought." He rose to take his leave.

"Before you go, Vicomte," said Geoffrey's father, "won't you tell us why you were so insistent in knowing about the garters?"

"Well," replied the Vicomte, who seemed more languid than ever, "you see the doctors who examined the body this afternoon discovered that Daisy had been poisoned, and there were some curious scratches just above her right knee."

The Vicomte took his leave, leaving two dumbfounded Englishmen behind him.

The next afternoon at three Geoffrey attended in the magistrate's room

'Go on with your story' ordered the magistrate

"Vera said Geoffrey, appeared to be very interested in me. She asked me where I came from and what I was doing in Paris. She pretended not to believe I was here on pleasure. Vera wanted to know what I knew about Daisy and I repeated all that Daisy had told me herself but this was not very much. Daisy came in earlier than I expected her. She gave Vera a cool little nod and when I went to sit with her she did not seem to be very pleased when I told her I had had supper with Vera.

'Now as to those garters' said the magistrate 'I want you to tell us all you can'

'That is easily told' replied Geoffrey. "Daisy was right. I was not keen to go to a French shop and ask for a pair of garters. The barman was chaffing me about it while Vera was sitting at the bar. Suddenly she said 'I'll get them for you if you like. You give me the money and I'll bring them here to you to-morrow night. There is no need for you to tell Daisy that I bought them.'

"I assented gladly and there and then handed over some notes to Vera, telling her to try and get a pair with jewelled buckles. She said she would and the next night gave them to me before Daisy arrived.

They were a pair of yellow garters with small diamond buckles. I gave them to Daisy as soon as she arrived, and she was very pleased with them.

'What happened then?' asked the magistrate

'Daisy said she would put them on at once. She went to the cloakroom and came back and said that she had put them on. She sat down for a few minutes and finished her champagne. Then she said she felt tired and would like to go home. I drove her home and left her at the door. I was to meet her the next afternoon at the Café de la Paix. She did not keep the appointment, so I took a cab and went to her flat. I found her dead' concluded Geoffrey with a break in his voice.

"That will conclude the hearing for to-day," remarked the magistrate. "We will let you know when we want you here again."

Just as the father and son reached the door, the father said "When are you going to call the girl Vera to give evidence?"

The magistrate smiled for the first time. "Vera and Jack have vanished," he replied.

"And the garters, what has become of them?" asked Geoffrey

"They, too, have disappeared," replied the magistrate.

Two days later the Convents, father and son, received a note asking them to call at the Embassy

"The case against your son has been dropped," said the First Secretary

"Can't you tell us what really happened?" asked Geoffrey

"The *Quai d'Orsay* people don't seem to want to say very much about it," replied the Secretary, "but from our own sources of information we have learned that the girl Daisy Hatton was connected with the French Secret Service. They thought rightly or wrongly, but I think rightly, that she had listened to some overtures from the other side. Probably she was seized with remorse, and had told the other people that she would not act for them. The other people represented by the girl Vera and the man Jack were afraid Daisy would denounce them, and so made up their minds to prevent her."

There was silence. Then Geoffrey said "I don't quite understand. How was it done?"

"You see," answered the Secretary, "the girl Vera bought the garters but before she gave them to you, she remembered what the Borgias used to do, and she or Jack, or one of their confederates put a poisoned needle in the elastic. The exercise of walking would I imagine gradually bring the needle into contact with the skin."

"But what became of the garters? How and why did they disappear?" asked Geoffrey's father

"We have no certain knowledge," answered the Secretary, "but it would not be difficult for anyone to obtain access to these furnished houses. The concierges are

used to people going up and downstairs at all hours of the day and night, and do not pay any attention. No doubt the pair of yellow garters were removed because of damaging evidence."

"Just one other question," said Geoffrey's father. "Who and what is the Vicomte, and what part did he play in this drama?"

"Ah" smiled the Secretary. "that is what we, too, would like to know. We think—but I must not tell you what we think."

CHAPTER XIV

FOREIGNERS IN THE UNDERWORLD

SOME years ago I was talking to an inspector of the C Division. The C Division has its headquarters in Vine Street, Piccadilly, and it knows as much as there is to know about the "lads of the village," or as they are known to the police, "men on the town." This particular detective said, *a propos* of the confidence tricksters. "The pigeons (the innocent young men) go where the women are, and the 'lads' go where they both are, so we have no difficulty in finding them." This accounts perhaps for the apparently easy way in which the police almost invariably arrest the confidence men as soon as they have brought off a coup.

The pendant to the remark of the London detective was supplied by William Debischoep, once Brigadier Chief of the Paris Sureté (the French Scotland Yard), who said to me "The best confidence men are the English, after them comes the Australians, and after them the Italians. The French are hardly any good at all." Debischoep also told me that in days gone by it was as easy as picking up shells on the seashore to arrest the French "crooks" when they were known to have made their way to London. All that there was to do was to go to a certain underground café in Leicester Square, London, and to arrest the wanted men. They always made for the same place. I may mention that this café, which was in its day the rendezvous of all cosmopolitan thieves and confidence men, has since become one of the most respectable cafés in London.

Paris has always been the Mecca of international thieves. They either go to Paris to bring off a coup, or else they go there to spend the proceeds of a robbery. There is a certain bar not a hundred miles from the Place de l'Opera, where one can always meet these denizens of the

Underworld This bar used to belong to a German, who became a naturalised French citizen. He committed suicide during the war by jumping out of one of the windows of an upper storey. He had the persecution mania. He thought the authorities were after him because he was a German. Articles had appeared in certain organs of the Paris press alleging that the bar-keeper was not a fit person to be the head of an establishment frequented by allied officers. Whether this was so or not is a moot point, but there is no doubt that the bar was always, and since many years the headquarters of the international confidence men when in Paris. A layman entering this bar during the quiet period in the afternoon would meet with a very curious experience. As one approached the swing doors, one would hear a buzz of conversation, then one would push open the doors and enter the bar. Dead silence. Half-a-dozen men would be assembled round the counter, resting their feet on the brass footrail but not a word would be heard. If you walked up to the counter and asked for a drink, you would be served in silence. Then a voice next to you would say "Well, how are things?" If one were wise one would murmur a reply, pay for one's drink, and make a dignified exit. And as soon as the doors had swung to behind you the buzz of conversation would break out again.

The international confidence men who "work" Paris have rather a good time on the whole. They frequent the bars where the racing men foregather, and it is on the outskirts of the racing fraternity that they gain their livelihood. Their usual wheeze is to enter into relationship with an English speaking person, for preference an Englishman or an American who does not understand racing under French rules. It is exceedingly easy to get in touch with their man. They will stand alongside of the intended "pigeon" in a bar and then begin a conversation. There are several methods of establishing relationship. One of the most common is, 'How are you? I haven't seen you since a long time,' pretending that they know you already. From this standpoint a conversation is easy. They will usually pose as novices themselves,

Paris and Brussels and had been in prison in both France and Belgium

It astonishes most people how these men so quickly get on their feet again as soon as they come out of prison. They may not have a sou in the world when the prison gates clang behind them but very soon afterwards they appear all dressed up and living on the fat of the land. The police tell me that these men and I am writing now of the international confidence trickster usually have a woman somewhere who is desperately in love with them. For reasons which are impossible to fathom the confidence trickster has a fascination for a certain type of a certain class of woman. These women give the men money and shelter and set them on their feet again so that they can resume their former occupations of robbing anyone whom they think worth while.

During the past fourteen years I have come across in Paris and the Riviera confidence men who belonged—once—to very good English families. They were men of breeding and education but who preferred to dive down into the Underworld rather than follow the straight and narrow path. One such man was once articled to a firm of London stockbrokers. He married the daughter of a rich Australian but threw up everything to become a crook. Time after time he was warned by the London police. He first came into their hands on the trivial charge of stealing by means of a trick a silver cigarette case. The police court magistrate discharged him. Then he went straight ahead on the downward path. He had been educated in Paris and spoke French well. He went to the French capital and launched out on a career of crime. Very soon he was arrested and since then he has been in and out of prison.

Another man who died just before the war was the son of a wealthy man. He served in a crack cavalry regiment but was very extravagant and thriftless. He lost thousands of pounds at cards and racing, got into the hands of card harpers and lost a heap more money. Time and again his father paid his debts and then swore that he would never pay another penny, which oath he kept. The son had to send in his papers and leave his regiment. When he had no more money left the card

CHAPTER XV

I

CRIME

OFTEN and often one hears it rumoured in Paris that the police service is to be reorganised but the reorganisation is always postponed until the Greek kalends.

In point of fact, the Paris control of the Underworld is remarkably efficient. The organisation is certainly rather old fashioned, and newer methods are not looked upon with favour, but, seen as a whole, the Prefecture of Police in Paris compares very favourably with similar services in any other European capital. The French police are perhaps weak at crime prevention, but when it comes to tracking down criminals, they shine at their best.

They are considerably helped in this work by the system of registration which has always existed in France although it became lax until the war, only to be revived and carried on efficiently. Foreigners were always supposed to register when they had been in France more than a fortnight, and the fine for not doing so was heavy. Although many thousands of foreigners omitted to comply with the formality, a surprisingly large number did comply. But it was not only with foreign criminals that the French police had to deal, they had to be on the track of their own people as well. Here their work was made lighter for them by the fact of the number of papers every Frenchman has to possess.

Whenever a Frenchman comes into contact with the police no matter how trivial the affair may be, he becomes the possessor of what is called *cassier judiciaire*, in other words, a booklet in which are written down all his delinquencies. Every entry made is recorded in the man's dossier kept at the Prefecture of Police. If

he comes into the hands of the police before he becomes a conscript, a third entry is made in his *livret militaire*, which every man who has served in the army carries about with him. To add to these papers there are numerous other cards of identity for various purposes. The authorities encourage the issue of these cards, so that when the police are looking for a man, their work is considerably simplified by the number of official records in existence.

The first thing the police do when they arrest a man for vagabondage is to ask for his papers. This may be opposed to the Briton's idea of freedom, but the truth is that an innocent man has nothing to fear, and those who have dark secrets in their lives lose nothing by having the said secrets known to the authorities. Indeed one might go farther and say that the community in general is better safeguarded by the French method of keeping a check on as many people as possible.

At the Prefecture of Police in Paris which corresponds with the London Scotland Yard, there is a special department known as the *police des mouches*. These detectives look after the hotels and furnished rooms and lodging houses of Paris. Every day they make their calls and take copies of the books of registration. But their work is not confined to this. It is their job to find out the occupations of suspected people. It is rare indeed for a criminal to remain very long at any particular address, and most of the French criminals find it impossible to dodge the "*police des ruelles*" for very long. Disguise is not often used by French detectives. The more usual method is to employ persons who are entirely unlike the conventional idea of a detective.

Perhaps readers will remember that when they have been sitting outside some Paris café a man or woman will come along selling postcards or hawking toys. If you watch these people closely you will be able to divide them into two classes—the real itinerant merchants who do their best to sell you their goods, and the others who go round the tables coming close to you and standing for a moment in front of every occupied table on the café terrace. The latter are the *mouchards* as they are

called—the employees of the Prefecture who are seeking a wanted man or woman. And they find them too.

The use of firearms by the criminals of France very naturally adds to the dangers of the detectives calling. Even a man wanted for some petty crime will pull out a revolver and open fire on the police who are about to arrest him. When forced to do so the police make use of their firearms and a veritable miniature battle begins greatly to the danger of passers-by.

I remember one bandit who had already killed one detective and wounded another two who were about to lay hands on him. He succeeded in escaping and was tracked to the hut of a rag-picker where his sister was living. The police numbering about five surrounded the hut made a dash and forced an entry. The bandit was sitting on a bed playing with a small child. Retaining his presence of mind he swiftly picked up the child and used it as a shield. The police were afraid to fire for fear of injuring the infant and swifter than thought the bandit snatched up a revolver from the mantelpiece and fired. A detective fell mortally wounded but before he could fire again another detective took careful aim fired and the bandit fell dead.

The interest in crime in France is something approaching unbelief. One prominent Paris daily newspaper keeps a reporter day and night in every police station and pays retaining fees to several men occupying important positions in the police service. It was said that Inspector Jouin who was killed when trying to arrest the motor bandit Bonnot at Ivry received more in fees from this newspaper than he did in pay from the Government. Practically every Paris newspaper entertains the closest relationship with some police officials or other. They have to do this in order to give their readers the fare they desire.

Crime in Paris has been on the increase since the war and statistics prove that 1920 was one of the worst years for crime Paris has ever experienced. I was told by M. Debischop once Brigadier-Chief of the Surete that there are more swordsmen and thieves in Paris at the present moment (June 1921) than at any period during

the last twenty years. During 1920, 25 000 people, of whom 20 000 were men, were arrested by the police of the First Division. Included in this figure were 356 under the age of fifteen. The judiciary police also made 12,000 arrests.

Assaults, thefts and drunkenness were the most common offences. There were nearly 4 000 charges of petty pilfering, while robbery with violence took place in 275 cases. There were 96 murders, 11 assassinations, and 1,671 criminal assaults in Paris in 1920.

Fraud cases are on the increase, and practically not a day passes without the police being notified that their interference is necessary. To their credit be it said that the criminals in fraud cases rarely escape punishment.

Long firm frauds are also very prevalent in Paris. I remember the case of an army deserter named Abel. Nearly £20 000 was involved in this instance. Abel had already been condemned three times for various offences, but on this occasion he had obtained huge quantities of goods by false pretences. Abel acquired a wholesale warehouse in the rue de Paradis—useful name—and also acquired the services of a young marquis named de Bougy. This man was only twenty-two. Immense quantities of goods came to the warehouse and they soon went out again, sold at absurdly low prices. The police had practically no evidence to go upon, but they were convinced that the marquis was a dupe, and they were correct. When Abel was arrested, there were only £6 in the safe.

From the middle of 1920 until June 1921, there were nightly raids by the police. These were 'round ups' carried out on a gigantic scale. Every night a different quarter was chosen and every room in every hotel and lodging house was visited. One night nearly eight hundred rooms were entered by the police, who on this occasion made over one thousand arrests. But not all of them were maintained. The men and women were taken to various police stations, and a certain percentage of them stayed there. The rest were allowed to return to resume their interrupted sleep.

But imagine the feelings of a man whose room was

invaded by the police. He is made to get up and dress and go to the police station. There he has to wait his turn to be cross examined. Then he is allowed to go home. The next morning he says to himself: I have had enough of this quarter. I don't like it. I'll go and take a room in the rue Untel. And the next night the rue Untel is visited by the police and the man's sleep is again interrupted. But one supposes it is all for the good of the community at large.

The Paris police complained that their work of exterminating the Apaches and other undesirable characters was hampered by the hospitals which form an ideal refuge for all classes of criminals. Although the police might round up in one night a thousand thieves, roughs, escaped convicts and suspicious foreigners, they were perfectly sure that as many more were to be found comfortably ensconced in hospital wards where they had gone to hide when finding that the police search for them was becoming uncomfortably warm.

The directors and staff of the Paris hospitals are very jealous of their privileges. If a person comes to them for treatment for a bullet wound, they say it is no duty of theirs to find out if he got it in an affray with the police or with some companions. They go further and refuse to allow the police to make any inquiries within the walls of the hospitals. This attitude of theirs which makes almost a sanctuary of the hospital was carried to such an extent that in 1914 the police were not allowed to search them for deserters, Germans and spies.

It will be readily understood that the Paris detective's life like Gilbert's policeman is not always a happy one.

To return for one moment to the question of foreigners and crime. I believe that for the foreign criminal Paris has become a Mecca. If an Albanian wants to shoot a man whom he considers is a menace to his country, he comes to Paris to do it. When a couple of Greek officers hire themselves out for assassins' work, they buy tickets for Paris. Bolsheviks revel in the Under world of Paris, indeed many first found faith there. There are many people in the Latin Quarter to-day who remember Trotsky spending his afternoons and evenings

in the Café de Dome seeking from whom he might borrow a five franc piece. When a particularly atrocious murder is committed in Paris you may be sure to find one or more Algerians implicated. As I have explained elsewhere in this book, the Gay City is made gayer by the presence within its walls of numerous English and American "confidence men. The international thieves never forget to pay Paris a visit, and as for the hotel thieves "rats" they are called in French, there is no city in the world in which they would rather operate than in the French capital.

So great was the danger to the public safety that the authorities decided to create a special brigade of police to watch out for the foreigners. Theirs the duty to inspect hotel and lodging house lists of arrivals enquire into the antecedents of foreigners and when necessary, to obtain personal details, which are compared with records at the Prefecture in order to discover whether there are any old acquaintances camouflaged with new names. They must also keep track of the women who are on the police lists, and also try and stamp out the male pests who live on these women. But these measures have met with severe criticism from authorities who believe they are not sufficiently stringent.

It is stated and with much truth, that many foreigners despite the passport regulations are able to cross the French frontiers. It is obviously impossible to bar the frontiers, because France wishes to continue to show hospitality to those who have done nothing to abuse its laws. There must, however, be a way to bar entry to France of evil doers of foreign nationality. It was therefore decided to introduce a law which would afford protection without touching the susceptibilities of the foreigner.

The law was drafted, but up to the time of writing has never come into force. If it does, and I believe it will it may very likely affect the livelihood of many Englishmen who have settled down in France. The new law gives the Government power to prohibit a foreigner living in certain zones, either because they are near a

frontier or because the region itself already suffers from the presence of too many foreigners

The foreigner without special authorisation will not be allowed to exercise the profession of hotel keeper or keep a café he cannot be in any way connected with the French Customs neither can he be a commission agent or run an inquiry office or hold any position in a chemical factory making material which interests the national defence and he cannot exploit a quarry

Anybody whether he be an hotel or lodging house keeper or just a personal friend who aids a foreigner to evade the law will be subject to severe punishment Identity cards once the law comes into force will only be granted to foreigners after a request for a card has been closely examined by the authorities and if at any time and for any reason the card is withdrawn the foreigner will have to leave the country within twenty four hours

Before I leave the subject of crime I must recount the story of the Abbé Consiglio an Italian priest who was accused of being concerned with some laymen in stealing motor cars—a very popular form of crime in Paris The Abbé was sentenced to imprisonment but he appealed and got off

The priest was most voluble when I saw and heard him in court on the first occasion He was entirely innocent he declared It was only appearances which were against him If he happened to be in a garage in which one of the stolen cars was found that was pure chance If a number of the other prisoners implicated in the affair were found in his rooms after the theft why that was simply because he was a kind hearted priest who had invited these poor rough fellows to take a glass of fine white wine of which he was very proud

The Abbé with his ruddy face and harsh mouth certainly cut a strange figure for a priest There was nothing meek or apologetic about him but also it must be said, nothing hypocritical either for when at the end of a day's hearing a woman came up to him bearing a child in her arms he publicly embraced both of them making no secret of the fact that the child was his

De Maupassant would have made a fine tale out of him

II

—AND PUNISHMENT

I have seen one bull fight. I have seen one man guillotined. I never wish to see either another bull fight or another guillotining.

The bull fight I saw years after I caught sight of a man's head dropping into the box of sawdust one rainy morning on the Boulevard Arago but before I had been an hour in the Plaza de Toros at Madrid, memories years old came surging back into my head. The excitement of the Spaniards, sitting in the blazing sun at the sight and smell of blood was the same excitement of the French that rainy morning in Paris. Latins all.

One must hark back to the public hangings in London to find something approaching the horror of cutting off a man's head in view of anyone who likes to get up early enough in the morning. I believe that in the bad old days when there were public executions at Newgate hawkers sold songs made up about the man who had just met his fate on the scaffold. Similar songs, doleful dirges were chanted in the famous Black Kitchen beloved of Arthur Pendennis. They took their pleasures sadly indeed in those days.

Many writers have described bull fights, but I have never read any story or article which adequately portrays all the horrors of it. The pageantry is forgotten when the ill-looking horses are horribly gorged by the bull's horns and even the undoubted skill of the toreador and the courage of the matadors pale before the brutality of this so-called sport. It is strange and passing strange that any country which can boast of its civilisation should tolerate the horrors of bull fighting. But if every country has the music it deserves so does every land have sports

most suited to its people. But I have wandered far from the rainy morning on the Boulevard Arago.

I had come to Paris (I think it was for the first time) with two friends from London. It was holiday time, either Easter or Whitsun. We had been seeing the sights—all of them. In the daytime we visited the Invalides and Notre Dame and all the other show places of the French capital. In the evening we went to the theatres and music halls. We never saw a newspaper of the country and therefore did not know what was happening. We were just in Paris for amusement—and I was very young.

One night we had been I remember to the Moulin Rouge—now no more—and afterwards made a round of the night restaurants. We returned to the boulevards and were sitting in the Café American gossiping. The night was well advanced. At the café we met some people who spoke English. I had not been paying much attention to the conversation but occasionally heard the word guillotine mentioned. It occurred again and again. I listened and heard them speaking about a man whose name I regret to say I do not remember but it appeared he was famous or perhaps notorious would be a better word. The man who was to die at dawn had murdered an old woman for her money and jewellery. The woman who was in love with the young man who was reputed to be handsome often used to invite him to her house and used to put on all her diamonds and pearls to dazzle the young lover who was wondering how he could best become the owner of the jewellery, which would decorate the body of a young person of whom he was fond. It was not a savoury story, and it was not a new story. Many young men both before and since have met their death for murders committed in very similar circumstances.

The talk went on about guillotining and I heard told the self same stories which Arnold Bennett recalls in the 'Old Wives Tale'. The story of the man who, walking to the guillotine behind the priest who was trying to keep the sight of it away from the condemned man,

Dawn had now broken as we gazed with some fascination at the strange scene. I thought of all the hundreds of people asleep in their beds not a hundred yards from where we were standing in the cold dawn while a fellow creature was being prepared to meet his Creator. Quite a crowd had gathered. They talked volubly in whispers, and showed no restiveness when mounted policemen appeared and steadily pushed them back from the foot of the guillotine. More police came on the scene and established a barrier around the fatal scaffolding preventing people from approaching too near.

Windows were thrown up and heads appeared. In the semi light of this spring morning one could see figures moving about around the chimney pots. The stage was now set.

There appeared coming from the prison a van drawn by two horses. It stopped a little way behind the guillotine. The executioner went towards the van and presently returned. In what appeared to be a lifetime, but which our watches told us was not more than a few seconds the prisoner appeared. *He was bound but not blindfolded.* He wore a shirt wide open at the neck and a pair of trousers. The rain was still falling in a drizzle.

In front of the prisoner and walking backwards was a priest who held a cross uplifted in the air, and who seemed to be saying a prayer. In an incredibly short time the little procession reached the guillotine and the priest kissed the doomed man on both cheeks, then leaving him to the executioner.

The executioner stood on the prisoner's right, and on the left was an assistant. They held the man between them and tied him down to the little rolling platform head foremost. The platform was pushed towards the guillotine, and at the same instant it touched the two scaffold poles the executioner released the cord which caused the gigantic knife to drop with a sickening thud, and the head fell into the box of sawdust.

There were murmurs of horror from the crowd and I had the sensation of both mental and physical sickness. In a few moments the sawdust box was being carried

shouted 'Stand out of the way there, I've paid to see this show, haven't I?'

And then there was mentioned the story which is supposed to be true and which most likely is, about Cora Pearl, the English courtesan in Paris, who managed to wheedle her way to permission to spend part of the night before the execution with the criminal in his cell.

After a lot more of this talk (strange talk enough among young Englishmen in Paris on holiday) somebody suggested we might go and see the execution which was to take place in a couple of hours' time. The suggestion which I am rather ashamed to say, received with approbation and going down into the street we hailed two horse-driven cabs and drove away under the leadership of a man who said he knew all about it. A slight drizzle was falling and we were all sleepy and tired and dozed more than once as the horses steadily clopped-clopped over the cobblestones along the Cours de la Reine en route to the Boulevard Arago. There was the first flush of dawn in the sky when we dismissed our cabs and waited.

The red painted scaffolding of the guillotine had been brought from its resting place and put into position. There is only one guillotine in France and the *leis de justice* as it is called travels all over the country, going from town to town wherever an execution is to be carried out. M. Deblier the executioner is known in criminal circles as M. de Paris. He appeared on the scene wearing a top hat and white gloves.

Workmen in blue blouses were putting the finishing touches to the ghastly scaffolding, and the executioner bustled about giving instructions to everyone and testing every screw and nut of the death-dealing machine. When the cords which were to hold the knife had been tested we saw the men lift a big piece of steel which had a semi-circular piece cut out of the middle and fix the cords to it. 'M. de Paris' with his own hands hoisted it to the top of the frame then released it and it fell with a sickening thud.

Then came the greasing and trying-out of the wheels which are fixed to a trolley like arrangement which rolls the condemned man's body toward the deadly knife.

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